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C. D. Darlington on 'The Hunting Hypothesis'

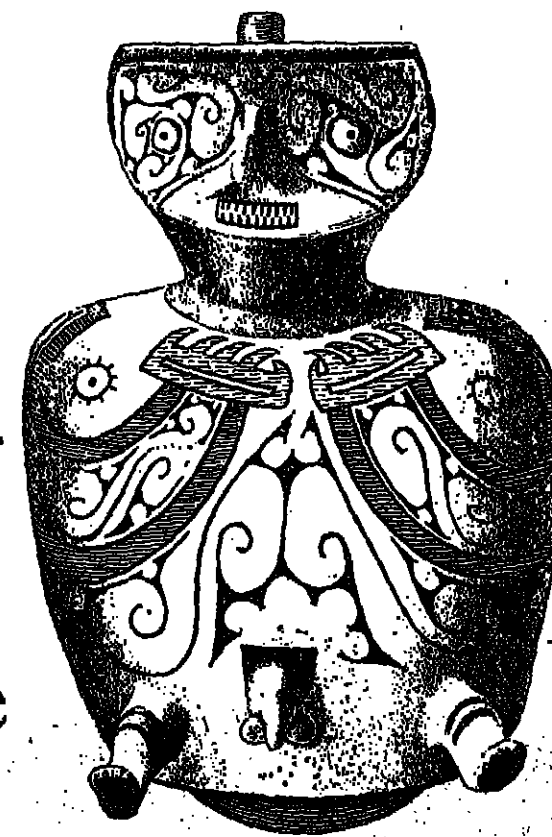
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Demonic pole from Cocle, Panama. See page 982

LATIN AMERICA

Jean de Léry and the Indians by Claude Lévi-Strauss

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JUAN DE LÉRY:

Au lendemain de la Saint-Barthélemy. Guerre civile et famine. Histoire mémorable du siège de Sancerre (1573). Edited by Gérard Nakan. 398pp. Paris: Anthropos. 55fr.

Histoire d'un voyage fait en la terre du Brésil. Edited by Jean-Claude Morisot. 463pp. Geneva: Droz. Sw fr 75.

By a happy chance both of Jean de Léry's major works have been reprinted only a few months apart: the *Histoire d'un voyage fait en la terre du Brésil*, and the *Histoire mémorable du siège de Sancerre*. Each appears opportunistically to celebrate a four-hundredth anniversary: the one edition of the *Histoire mémorable* dates back to 1574, the first edition of the *Voyage* to 1578. So far as the unabridged text of the *Voyage* is concerned, we already had a good modern edition by Paul Gaffarel (1880); but the *Histoire mémorable* had become more or less inaccessible. Thanks to Gerardo Nakan's excellent edition, this substantial and very lively work is now, if proof be needed, that the exceptional qualities as a writer which Léry displays in the *Voyage* were not due merely, as he himself puts it, to the "beau style" which they "avaient en la bouche des hommes de bien."

The circumstances of his voyage are well known. Admiral Nicolas de Villegaignon, a knight of Malta, who had fought against the Turks and taken part in the abduction of Mary Queen of Scots, had the idea of creating in Brazil a colony in which Catholics and Protestants might live together in a spirit of mutual tolerance. He won over Admiral de Coligny to his plan, and Coligny obtained royal support. Villegaignon left France in 1555 with several hundred volunteers on board, among whom, besides artisans and soldiers, were wastrels and even criminals brought expressly from the prisons. There were also respectable Protestants, and the celebrated Francis, son of the monk André Thevet, subsequently the author of the *Singe*

luride de la France antérieure (1558) and the *Cosmographie universelle* (1575). This malevolent rival of Léry ended his days in the coveted post of "King's Cosmographer."

On his arrival, Villegaignon built a fortress on an island (which today bears his name) in the bay of Rio de Janeiro. But relations with the Indians turned sour, famine set in, and the ex-convicts rebelled; they were massacred. The leader of the expedition underwent a religious crisis and looked to Calvin to enlighten him: the latter dispatched a number of theologians, among them Léry. Things now became more complicated, the Protestants trying to convert the Catholics and vice versa. Villegaignon, whose mind was disturbed, turned against the Protestants and tried to starve them out. The Protestants crossed over to the mainland and shared the life of the Indians while they waited for a boat to take them back to France. Léry profited from this interlude to take notes, and these provided him with the material for a text which was lost for a first time then reconstructed, then lost again and miraculously recovered. It finally appeared in 1578 and went through five successive editions in its author's lifetime followed by two more after his death.

Here, in the mid-sixteenth century, we have the first example of an ethnography which today we would call "participatory" and whose vivacity and freshness were unequalled until Malinowski, Léry learnt the language and went from village to village. He describes everything: the landscape, animals and plants; he devotes an entire chapter to the birds, each species of which he depicts with the precision of a naturalist and the wonder of a poet. Was his motto not "Plus voir qu'avoir"? And he not only sees the Indians as they were, never to be seen again, he strangles his account in the words of a subsequent generation to become that of all monographs: first physical anthropology, clothes, adornments; then foodstuffs, next institutions such as war, religion, kinship and the political system; and finally language. His description of the grand rites of cannibalism, in which prisoners of war fell victim—coddled first of all, provided with a wife and treated for months if not years as honoured members of the tribe, before being

solemnly put to death and devoured—figures among the masterpieces of ethnographic literature of all time. It is more complete than that of Hans Staden, who was however talking from experience, since, a few years before, he had almost been eaten himself.

But Léry does not only report what he has seen, he also proves himself to be a comparatist. Throughout the work he compares the customs of the natives with Catholic rites which, as a good Protestant, he finds shocking and ridiculous; or else with certain folkloristic celebrations of the ancient world. At a time when Europeans were torn by religious strife and when the birth of a mercantile economy was degrading people's way of life, the simple life of the Indians appeared to him almost as idyllic. One must guard against anachronism, however: Léry's Protestant faith keeps him at far remove from the cultural relativism which flourishes among the ethnographers of the present century. Noting that the Indians believed in the immortality of the soul, and were afraid of thunder and other unexplained phenomena, he concluded that this presence of a supernatural order makes it even more inexcusable that they had formed no clear idea of the divinity. If the Protestant mission of Léry was part had not been thunder and other unexplained phenomena, he concluded that this presence of a supernatural order makes it even more inexcusable that they had formed no clear idea of the divinity. If the Protestant mission of Léry was part had not been thunder and other unexplained phenomena, he concluded that this presence of a supernatural order makes it even more inexcusable that they had formed no clear idea of the divinity.

Unlike his contemporaries—German, French or Portuguese—who lived in Brazil, Léry thus brought back from his journey a work whose literary and philosophical qualities are so engaging that they run the risk of thrusting its ethnographic merits into the background. This perhaps explains why Léry should have made so little use of a book in which he will not have found the documentary dryness of the texts he was accustomed to handling. He seems to have known only the first Latin translation of the *Voyage*, of 1586, and he cites it in all only three times: once in *The Golden Bough* and twice in *Folklore in the Old Testament*.

Both as a moralist and as a writer, Léry found himself faced by an exceptionally difficult, and even in a sense heroic task: of describing things, people and ways of living and thinking of which his European readers could have no idea. He accomplished it with an artistry, one might even say a virtuosity, which can still be taken for a model today. It is true that Léry was served by that admirable French of the sixteenth century—the French of Rabelais and Montaigne—which is not afraid of long sentences, crammed with circumstantial clauses; a language which enables him to accumulate details, to consider all the facets of an object simultaneously, and to assemble more information in a single statement than we today, with our own impoverished language, would feel capable of stringing together. In this way, the language of Léry's *Voyage* proves all the particularities of an object, however complex and unexpected it may be, can be exhaustively catalogued at one go.

Yet there is nothing archaic about this delightful book. On the contrary, it anticipates modern works. The page, for example, where Léry, like so many field-workers after him, describes himself by Indian names and as a fish-brother, is a beautiful and amusing "de voir cette petite marmaille toute nue, laquelle pour trouver et amasser les herbes pour se faire le dîner, se traînent par terre comme des cochons." (wild rabbits). But he is distressed that although this picture, together with many others, is forever engraved on his mind, it is so difficult for him "de les bien représenter ni par écrit ni même par peinture". Jean-Claude Morisot, the editor of this new edition, rightly notes that Léry seems to be feeling the need for the ethnographic film.

In another passage it is surely Proust's madeleine which is foreshadowed when Léry, after his return home, finds himself in a place where starch and soap are hard to come by, and breathing in the smell, is transported to the houses of savages, busy making manioc flour, which "à la vraie senteur de l'amidon, fait de pur froment longtemps trémpé dans l'eau quand il est encore frais et liquide". Equally striking, as prefiguring the *Voyage en Amérique*, is the account of a

march in the company of three Indians

à travers une grande forêt, contemplant en icelle tant de divers arbres, herbes et fleurs verdoyantes et odoriférantes: ensemble oyant le chant d'une multitude d'oiseaux rossignol, d'outardes, de corbeaux, de faucons, de vautours, de hiboux, de chouettes, de serins, de pinçons, de toutes ces choses, ayant d'ailleurs le cœur gai, je me pris à chanter à haute voix le Psalm 104.

This new edition of the *Voyage* is a facsimile of the second edition of 1580, which was more complete than the first and less cluttered with the not always relevant comparative data which Léry introduced into the third. Such an edition has two advantages: a rigorously accurate text, avoiding the errors of transcription which here and there mar Gaffarel's edition; and the illustrations, which did not appear in the 1578 edition but which are very well reproduced here, so that we can admire the vigour and purity of their penmanship. "Flammarion" line (with relief added), Jean-Claude Morisot has provided the text with an excellent introduction and some valuable scholarly notes; these I think, call for two small comments. South American "ostriches" are not cassowaries (page 424), which are also running in the text, but quite different from ostriches and peculiar to Australia, Melanesia and southern Indonesia; nor does M. Morisot take into account, if only to discuss them, indications that Léry died in 1613 and not 1611.

Perhaps I may be allowed to finish on a personal note. Of the authors who have exercised a great influence on my own ideas, though admittedly in very different spheres, two stand out very front rank: Jean de Léry and Ferdinand de Saussure. As chance would have it, the house in which I hope to spend my old age is situated in the north of Burgundy, not far from Lagny-sur-Marne where Léry was born. Towards the end of his life he was the pastor at Vufflens, the home of the Saussure family, where stands the ancestral château, which Ferdinand occupied in his last years. My Surrealist friends of old would have seen this trifling coincidence as the result of what they called an "hasard objectif".

AMERICAN HISTORY

From resistance to revolution

By Jack Greene

IAN R. CHRISTIE and BENJAMIN W. LABAREE:

Empire or Independence 1760-1776. A British-American Dialogue on the Coming of the American Revolution. 332pp. Oxford: Phaidon. £5.95.

Over the past quarter century, there has been a massive and wholly unprecedented outpouring—almost a deluge—of detailed studies on most aspects of the era of the American Revolution in both Britain and America. Although the bicentennial of the Revolution provides an obvious occasion for drawing together into a general synthesis the findings of these many specialized works, *Empire or Independence 1760-1776* by Ian R. Christie and Benjamin W. Labaree is one of the few, and certainly one of the most sophisticated, efforts in this direction so far published this year.

As the subtitle announces, it represents an attempt to achieve a balanced account of the origins of the Revolution by combining the expertise of a leading scholar of British politics with that of an accomplished student of the American side of the controversy. Professor Christie is well known for the depth and range of his scholarship on the politics of the reign of George III. His books include both a detailed analysis of parliamentary politics during the last years of the American War for Independence, and a study of political radicalism in Britain during the first decades of the reign of George III. Professor Labaree's study, *The Boston Tea Party*, reviewed in fundamental ways our understanding of the crisis that finally rent the old British Empire.

Not surprisingly, the result is a remarkably successful collaboration largely free from the national bias, imbalance, and superficiality (about one side or the other) that has so often marred previous general accounts. The prose style is crisp, clear, and sufficiently uniform to make it difficult to tell where one author begins and the other ends. The limitations of space prevent Professor Labaree from always conveying clearly the richness and complexity of the American side of the controversy, and the difficulty of integrating developments in thirteen separate political entities into a single narrative is extraordinary.

Professor Christie's account of the British side is the best available. If the book breaks little new ground, it does the less provide a clear and authoritative narrative of the central developments of the long dispute that preceded the American decision for independence. If it sometimes suffers from a lack of analytic clarity, it offers a thoughtful and informed, if not always explicit, judgment on most of the major questions concerning the origins of the Revolution. Indeed, it serves as an excellent point of departure for assessing the present state of scholarly opinion on those questions.

Despite many disagreements about emphases and points of detail, a rough consensus has emerged over the past two decades on two points: first, that Americans were not, before the 1760s, sufficiently dissatisfied with either the economic or political relationship with Britain to think in terms of separation; and second, that what discontent, resistance, and eventually a movement for separation, were the many efforts by metropolitan authorities, beginning in the 1760s, to tighten control over the colonies' economic and political life through parliamentary taxation and trade restrictions. On both of these questions the authors reach the same conclusions.

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A crippled and ineffectual England tries to control a crowd of rebellious offspring. "Poor old England endeavouring to reclaim his wicked American Children." A cartoon of 1777 from *Revolutionary America* (Lilly Library Publication Number XXVI), the catalogue of an exhibition at the Lilly Library of Indiana University.

Much more controversial are six additional questions: 1, why the British and Grenville governments undertook the new restrictive measures in the first place; 2, why the colonists resisted them so vigorously from so very early on; 3, why successive British governments persisted in such measures in the face of such animated and widespread resistance; 4, why no British government could see that there might be some middle ground between total subordination and complete independence; 5, why, given the depth and extent of their opposition, the colonists waited so long to opt for independence; and 6, what bearing social and political tensions within the colonies had upon the colonial response?

The first question has received little systematic attention. Yet in many ways, the central question about the Revolution. If the colonists were in fact acclimatized to the imperial system by the 1760s, and if it was only the new British measures thereafter that drove them to resistance against metropolitan control, then why did the metropolitan government choose to tamper with a system that had yielded British such extraordinary economic and strategic returns at so little cost—before 1756 Britain had kept no effective military force in the continental colonies—is one that demands careful scrutiny.

The conventional answer has been that the Seven Years War and its successful outcome, either revealed or created a whole series of problems that required more active and qualitatively different metropolitan involvement in the colonies' affairs: the involvement in territories acquired from the French and Spanish by the peace of 1763 had to be organized and administered, trade regulations in the colonies had to be enforced, the army in America had to be provided for, British merchants had to be protected against the inflation of colonial paper currencies, and most important of all, the vast debt incurred as a result of the war had to be paid.

Professor Christie and Professor Labaree do not underestimate the importance of such considerations; but they offer a commendable effort to go beyond the traditional explanation they trace the new policies to a deep-seated and broadly shared suspicion "that the colonies were a threat to the balance of power in the world." They argue that the colonies, by their very existence, were a threat to the balance of power in the world. They argue that the colonies, by their very existence, were a threat to the balance of power in the world. They argue that the colonies, by their very existence, were a threat to the balance of power in the world.

Why American resistance was so vigorous and so immediate is an equally complex question. The authors follow current orthodoxy in attributing it largely to the traditional British suspicion of unlimited power. But it is important to add that that suspicion derived not merely from their intellectual heritage or from their experience with politics inside the colonies, but also, as an older generation would have appreciated, from the ambiguous constitutional arrangements that obtained in Britain. Having been a psychological ally liberating and reinforcing

17.00 to obtain explicit constitutional guarantees that would put them on a comparable footing with people in the home islands and secure their liberties and property from any possible misuse of the unlimited might of the metropolis, the colonists had been left with no stronger defence than local custom (in no case of more than 150 years' standing) or their uncertain claim to the traditional rights of Englishmen, however those rights might or might not be applicable to distant colonies. Anxious arising from this constitutional insecurity were largely dormant after 1725 as a consequence of the relaxed colonial administration under Walpole and his immediate successors. But they remained activated when imperial reorganisation after 1763 "inevitably involved the use of power in ways which had not hitherto been customary".

The apparent significance of this reorganization was also important to most politically informed Americans. It seemed to be an arbitrary and dangerous breach of the traditional relationship between the metropolis and the colonies; it threatened both to deprive them of effective control over the internal affairs of their own political societies, and to reduce them to a status within the empire that was equivalent to that of the politically excluded classes in the home islands. Such a status might be fitting for servants and slaves, women and children, the propertyless and the incompetent. But it was scarcely suitable for independent adult male Britons. In colonial America, quite as much as in early modern Britain, civil emancipation was a familiar condition. With the vivid and omnipresent example of the southern portion of the continent and other dependent groups in their own societies constantly before them, the colonists' complaint that taxation by, without representation in, Parliament would reduce them to slavery came directly from the heart. Far from being a cultural mimicry, it was expressive of the most profound fears and anxieties. Not just their liberties and property but their identity as freeborn Britons, their manhood itself, seemed to be threatened by the new metropolitan posture towards the colonies.

The timing of the new measures, moreover, further stimulated colonial opposition—and not just for the familiar reason that the recent removal of the French and Spanish from the eastern half of North America made the colonists less dependent upon Britain for protection. For the colonists, the Seven Years War had been a psychological ally liberating and reinforcing

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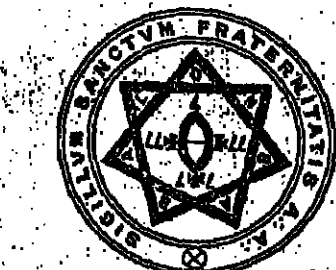
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envisioned for the colonies
was not so widely misinter-
preted as the British propa-
ganda contended, was no more
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an demands for a more equal
and autonomous role within
the British Empire's politi-
cal system. It can be argued
plausibly that better com-
munications would have hastened
the prevented revolution.

of Great Britain, the text. They have been advised, however, to be wary of the *Front Page* and General MacArthur's comments on the general issue, including selections from Lord Devlin and Professor Hart themselves; and seven chapters covering, respectively, capital and non-capital punishment, sexual questions, the rights of the human fetus, pornography and obscenity, and the

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Practice and profession

By John Pope-Hennessy

MARK ROSKILL:

What is Art History?

192pp with 127 illustrations. Thames and Hudson. £4.95 (paperback), £12.50.

It is a commonplace that answers to questions are determined by the form in which the question is asked. "What is the soul?" inquires Miranda's sister, Ulysses, in Dryden's *Tempest*. "A small blue thing," replies her lover Hippolito, "that runs about within us." Then I have seen it," concludes the clever girl, "on a frosty morning, run smoking from my mouth."

"What is art history?" asks Mark Roskill on the cover of his book. A scientific discipline, he answers, with "a highly developed technical character" which offers excitement and rewards, and is also "a profession." A profession is unquestionably is, for throughout the Western world generations of students are training or being trained in this anomalous, hybrid pursuit. But people who protest that it is neither a science nor a discipline will find many cogent and some unanswerable arguments in this book.

Between an introduction on the origins and growth of art-history and an epilogue called "The art historian today," are sandwiched nine chapters on attributing paintings (illustrated from a number of specific, not very well-chosen instances), on collaboration between artists (discussed in terms of Masaccio and Masaccio in the Brancacci Chapel), on "deciding the limits of an artist's work" (that of Piero della Francesca, whose work is self-defining), on "cutting through mystery and legend" (with special reference to Giovanni Veronesi, where they flourish like garden weeds that have been trampled with scythes), on "reconstructing how the artist worked" (based on the Raphael 'cartoons' in the Sistine Chapel, which were hardly ever displayed at all), on the rediscovery of an artistic personality (Georges de la Tour), on "disguising oneself in paintings" (principally by the masters of concealment, Velazquez and Vermeer), on "forgery and its detection" (the typical case of Van Meegeren, who himself identified the pictures he had forged), and on "understanding a modern picture" (predominantly Pissarro's "Guernica"). Mr. Roskill explains in his preface that "I chose examples from the fields which include artists in whom I have a strong personal interest," but the individual chapters reveal no trace of personal observation or personal commitment, and are based, like most routine university lectures, on the reporting of earlier scholars' work.

An interesting manual could indeed be written on art-history. It would include a section on connoisseurship (that is, on the technique

of style analysis that has enabled so many art historians to establish the authenticity of unsigned, undated paintings), and would explain the governing concept of similitude and the ways in which it was developed or perverted or reflected by successive art-historians. Mr. Roskill's chapter on "The Attribution of Paintings" does not do this. It contains three paragraphs on Morrell and Berenson, which will introduce the reader, if to nothing else, to two of the book's weaknesses, an inability to formulate ideas (for Mr. Roskill "a basic issue raised by Morrell's approach is that it

tends to confuse morphology, such as handwriting, and the style of an artist, which always involves numerous factors, most especially the work of other artists"), and a defective grasp of fact (Berenson's house, I fail, is not situated "on a hillside overlooking the little village of Settignano", and anybody who could suppose it was either does not know the house or does not know Settignano).

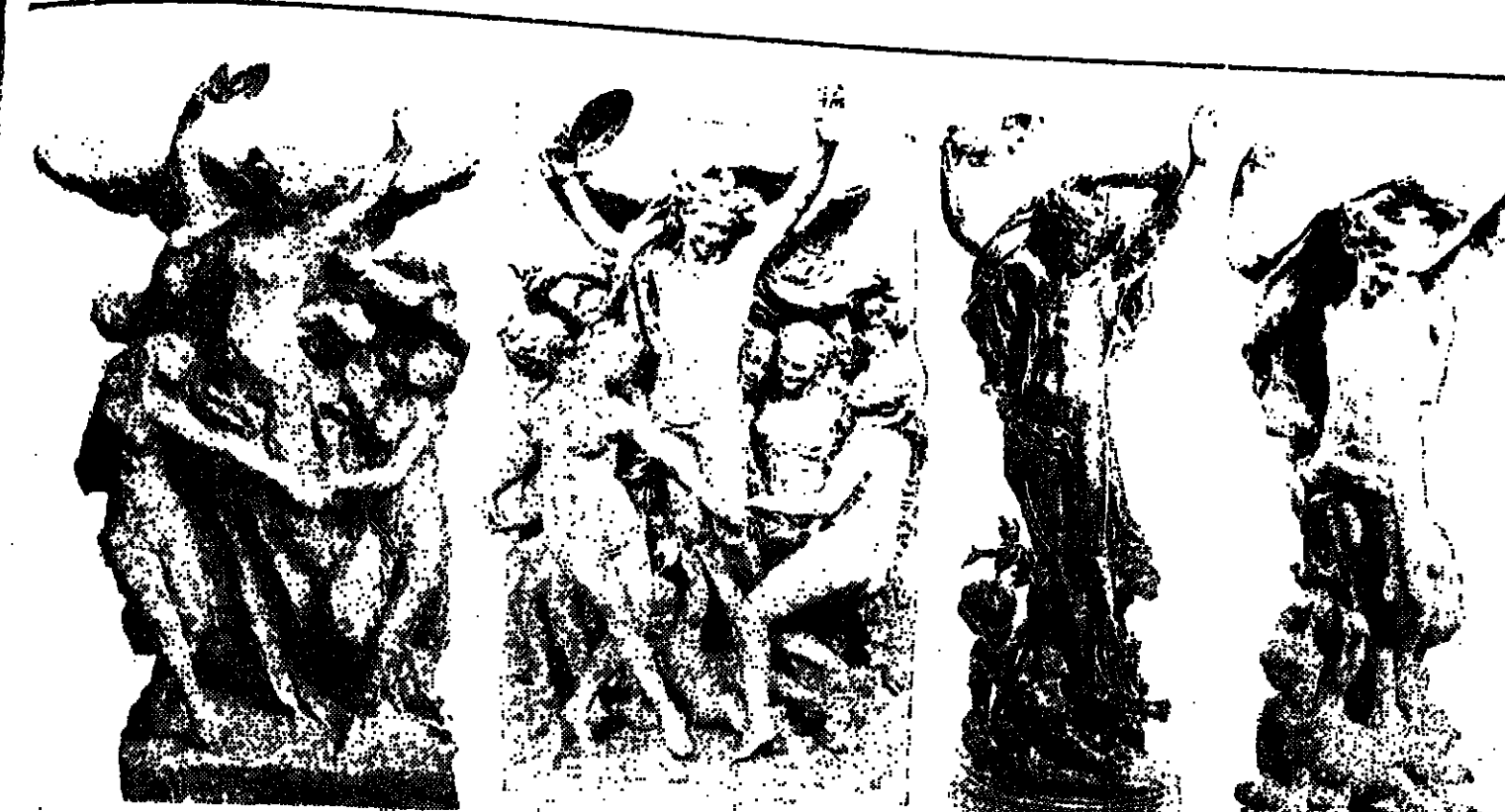
At this point the thread is broken by examples of "the luck involved in finding a hitherto unknown painting." If you work hard enough, Mr

Roskill seems to be saying to the undergraduates for whom the book must have been written, you too, like X, may identify a Titian portrait as such, or like Y, prove that a supposed copy of a Caravaggio is really the original, or, like Z, reveal a Rembrandt monogram on some wrongly attributed painting. Perhaps who knows? — you may even find another Tiepolo ceiling in South Audley Street, or, as I did, discover a Gauguin drawing in an envelope in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. One would indeed be hard put to it to deny that if they

were sufficiently perspicacious and methodical, near-headed, imaginative and self-critical, a few of Roskill's readers might eventually discover something new.

If, however, one were in some temptation to interrupt him, one would mutter, that the St. Anne in the "Anna Metterza" from Ambrogio in the Uffizi is so-called does not "stand behind the frescoed 'Crucifixion' in its do with Masaccio? And where is the distinction between the style of Masaccio and Masolino, do you not so much as mention Masaccio's Pisa polyptych, the key work in which the distinction is based? Why, if you wish to raise the problems of Piero della Francesca's altarpieces, have you not been into them more thoroughly? Why do you take no account of compositional procedure, and why do you use the word 'derivative' when you use your analysis of the work of Giotto alone with the biblical paintings in the Uffizi, and how can you be sure that your round by round blow report on his brief development is historically correct?

That account of parallels between Poussin and La Tour, of a tendency of all art of a certain civilization to move, over a period of years, in the same direction, is it any validity? And can you understand that art-history is really the study of the human creative process, of how works of art come into being and why they assume the form they do, not a complicated game of convention-riding on the rules? Of one thing one can be confident, when in future one is asked what is wrong with pedagogical art-history, it will be possible to refer inquired to this embarrassing but unembarrassed book.



The fine art of self-destructive nonsense

By Suzi Gablik

K. G. PONTUS HULTEN:

Jean Tinguely

36pp with 519 illustrations, 13 in colour. Thames and Hudson. £12.50.

The answer to the question "What is art and hums?" is not, what you may have heard, an electric plug, that is that horrific, magnificent, obnoxious and most improbable, descendant of the Venus de Milo, a Tinguely sculpture. It may move forwards and backwards across a room, run into a wall, dissect a shop-window dummy, jump into the foreground if one happens to be handy, produce a hundred Expressionist drawings all with the sting of originality, or show itself up with earthquake-like effects. It was years, Pontus Hultén tells us, before a store manager could be persuaded to display the sign: "Come in and buy before Tinguely smashes everything." Indeed, Tinguely had long before the most topical of subjects: to build a machine that would destroy consumer goods. The project, when, in the autumn of 1965, the display window of a Swiss department store (Galleries Lafayette had refused the offer), "Roboter III" was installed, a gargantuan machine eight metres

long and containing a massive hammer-mechanism that relentlessly destroyed 12,000 plates in the course of a few days, at the rate of ten plates a minute. On another occasion, a sculpture placed in a central square of Stockholm attacked its own plinth with a saw. Beware, then, those who would take arms against an innocent row of bricks, which has the good taste at least merely to sit there, mindless. You never know when a Tinguely may be on the rampage. And for Tinguely, a sculpture must be a holiday of Mind. The holiday over, nothing must remain. Ashes, trampled garlands.

Tinguely is to sculpture what Satie was to music: a true subversive with a taste for slapstick comedy and a grand sense of farce. It is as if Gaudin was dropping weights off the tower of Pisa disguised as a Chinese Red Riding Hood, or the theory of relativity had got translated into Arab and Bantu exclamations. "Nonsense," Tinguely declares, "is a poetic element in a Nutcracker." One of the last true Dadaists, he combines the outlandish with the improvisational and a taste for real physical danger. (Tinguely is also a racing-car addict.) The one thing that does not concern him is the making of solemn, impassive, statuesque feeling to extremes. There is none of that precise division between good and bad that we are used to.

"Méta"—short for meta-mechanical—is a term Hultén invented to

describe Tinguely's bogus machines. Contrived out of discarded wheels, misaligned rotary mechanisms and electric motors (which can be reloaded on to produce mechanical disorder), the sculptures are "paroxysms of junk in motion." They are like "a ballet danced for 'invaders'." Tinguely deliberately opposes chance to precision of judgment, and the result is "pure anarchy in its most beautiful form." Here I would cite an extraordinary group of arabesques of ornamental wrought-iron fragments, old bicycle wheels and the rococo tangle of garden hoses, all sensationally spraying water into the air.

Hultén situates Tinguely in an art-historical context, takes in Duchamp (his irony, his up-ended bicycle wheel), Schwitters, and Zauschenberg (clothing the gap between art and life); Calder (movement and kinetic); and Pollock (improvisation). In a sense, Tinguely is an "Action" sculptor, who knows how to stage a happen- ing. In New York, for instance, in 1960, he constructed a machine designed to destroy the Museum of Modern Art before an audience fenced in behind chicken wire. An enormous, lunatic contraption, assembled from debris collected in New Jersey dumps, it performed absurdly for half an hour and then proceeded to destroy itself, but not without mishaps of a sort requiring intervention by the New York City Fire Department. Hultén provides

a string of fabulous anecdotes which describe the pandemonium of these occasions. Here is an account of a Copenhagen spectacle staged in the "Study for an End of the World."

As darkness fell Tinguely set fire to his sculpture before an audience from Copenhagen (headed by the Danish Prime Minister) and from the elegant suburban area in which the museum is situated. It was a magnificent spectacle of blazing and burning rockets, accompanied by all sorts of side-shows: a rocking horse rocked wildly; a doll's pram trundled up; the Russian astronaut Yuri Gagarin, in the form of a broken doll, was shot into space; and, as a finale, the French flag descended slowly by parachute. The explosions were sometimes as violent as the audience's, clothes were blown about as if by a gale-force wind, and rockets flew over their heads.

Later it was found that a dove of peace, which should have flown up thirty seconds after ignition and didn't, was dead among the rubble. This produced great storms of protest in the press, where it was asserted that France's artists should not be allowed to come and kill Danish doves. Tinguely was nearly put in jail, but in the end, merely had to pay a fine.

The most famous Tinguely machine was these designed to produce abstract-expressionist drawings. One of these "meta-machines" is installed in the bookshop of the Moderna Museet in Stockholm. Upon inser-

tion of a coin, it produces a postcard-size drawing. The machine is so successful that it has already earned enough money to purchase other works for its museum collection. In 1959, Tinguely made about thirty meta-machines which he destroyed because he considered that they drew badly. He once had a plan to make a "super-meta-ultra-matic" machine that would wander through the streets and point directly on the paving stones, but it was never completed.

The thing that makes one artist differ from another is what he chooses to include as to leave out of his work. In the case of Tinguely, everything interests him; he misses nothing. His sculptures do not conform to any preconceived notion, to any orderly or predictable structure. He gives us the density of the world—pure sensory experience, as it is lived. By contrast, the more formalist optics of other kinetic artists, Agam, Soto, Vasarely—which whom Tinguely's work has often been associated and exhibited, pale in comparison with his unpredictable, rich and cacophonous nature. Tinguely is profoundly, splendidly, his own man, and Hultén scales the heights of the mountain with natural grace. The one-time curator of the Moderna Museet, and now the new director of Beaubourg in Paris, he is Tinguely's ideal Boswell, being a long-standing patron, supporter, collaborator and friend. The book has put together, both pictures and text, is a great moment of personal and public triumph—a diamond in the swamp grass of art-critical drudgery.



"River-crossing at Schreckenstein", 1835 (detail) by the Dresden artist Ludwig Richter (1803-84), perhaps best known for the folkish churning of his later work as a book-illustrator; from *Hans Joachim Neidhardt's Ludwig Richter* (Leipzig).

Portraits in proportion

By Eric Adams

EDWARD MEAD JOHNSON:

Francis Cotes
Complete Edition with a Critical Essay and a Catalogue
178pp. Oxford: Phaidon. £15.95.

Two English artists, both eminences of the second rank, have lately been accorded important monographs. One is the romantic, eccentric, painter John Martin, by William Weaver (reviewed in the 715, January 30, 1976); the second is the eighteenth-century portraitist Francis Cotes. It is satisfying to notice that both have been given the book they deserved. Mr. Weaver's book is in the spirit, its keeps of indistinguishable fact and metaphor abundant; the Twelve Prophets, through the pages, vividly conveying the urgency of Martin's hectic but narrow imagination. Edward

Mead Johnson's book is crisp, correct and traditional, the balance plates arranged in symmetrical order between the appendixes and a catalogue raisonné of unexceptionable detail and clarity, the introductory essay modest and succinct, meticulously distinguished and documented. The jacket, which shows Cotes's portrait of the artist Paul Sandby, half-fanning out of an exquisitely joined and proportioned interior to sketch the outlines of a park, positively invites you to open the book as the entrance into a vanished world of enlightened sense and good manners, and the table of contents instantly assures you that you are there.

The introductory text is brief—matter of forty-six pages—partly because of the author's welcome disposition to spin it out, but also because there is not a very great deal to be said about Cotes. He painted with great skill and finesse, but without either remarkable originality or reach of ambition; there are no hidden corners to his mind, no problems to his style.

Moreover, sadly, there is a dearth of biographical detail. Cotes was born in 1726, the first son of an apothecary who had settled to that profession in London after being expelled from a political career by an unlucky involvement in the first question. He trained as a painter under George Knapp, a portraitist of good standing but limited powers whom he easily surpassed; from about 1747 until his death in 1770 he carried on a substantial portrait practice in London that was eventually bringing him fees midway between those of Gainsborough and Reynolds, and he was one of the sixteen directors of the Royal Society of Arts who succeeded in 1769 to found the Royal Academy. He died early of an attempt to cure himself of the stone. This bare narrative is enlivened at a single point by the diary of one of his pupils, John Russell, a self-absorbed young Methodist leech who some of the Cotes household with his exaggerated piety. Cotes accused him of corrupting the servants by leaving day driven to call him "Blessed-mer" when he "defended the doctrine of Election and spoke of the Exceeding Sinfulness of Sin."

Cotes's chief claim to historical attention is his eminence as a painter in pastels. He is certainly the most distinguished English artist to have used the medium habitually, and in Mr. Johnson's judgment he was more at home with it than with oils, which he handled with a certain lightness and grace, but with soft textures, light shades and intimate tonalities, was essentially a rococo medium, and Mr. Johnson shows how Cotes, learnt from Rosalba Carriera, the Venetian queen of cosmetics, portraits, and from such other Continental portraitists as Liotard and Quentin de la Tour, but also how he added to the tradition by superimposing the colours in layers and achieving exceptionally brilliant and positive hues—framing the more forceful qualities of oil close analysis not often applied to the portraitist. Mr. Johnson also traces Cotes's stylistic progress, from his adoption of Allan Ramsay's compositional grand style of Joshua Reynolds, the grand style of Joshua Reynolds, to the restrained and elegant style of Sir Joshua Reynolds. It was without exception that Cotes was the new, almost inap-

prehensible fashion for posing his subjects before imaginary landscapes, dressed in the draperies of a period, and uncumbered with the attributes of heathen deities or heroes of fiction. Nor were his occasional attempts to give an intellectual air to his sitters more than half-hearted; as Mr. Johnson points out, Reynolds aimed at spiritual, Cotes at decorative style; he was happier with inlaid effects than with formal grandeur. The beautiful "Princess Louisa and Queen Caroline Matilda of Denmark" at Carolina Matilda's portrait is a point: the format of a full-length royal double portrait is almost a prescription for stateliness, yet Cotes managed to avoid it by casting the lofty dimensions of his composition into a play of gentle, rocco curves and a delicate, exhibiting the close relationship between these two illustrated young women with exceptional tenderness and tact.

The distinctive qualities of Cotes's portraits are a certain blandness of expression coupled with fastidious planning and execution. The blandness is evident in the treatment of his sitters' eyes; they neither glow nor sparkle like Reynolds's, nor swim with feeling like Gainsborough's; they avoid contact with a hair's breadth they miss precise direction, or misdirected gaze that would express what is going behind them. Likewise, faces and figures, although drawn with care, are inert, and their owners remain curiously distant from us. On the other hand, and feeling for symmetry and proportion and, in the pastels at least, handled with exquisite craftsmanship, Cotes must have been a practical man with an orderly mind, a craftsman with a deep regard for the quality of his work, and a desire to achieve long biographies. The portrait of Sandby sketching seems to express these traits perfectly; it is a memorable image of the type which even the least demanding eye will throw up at once in its lifetime, whether he intends it or not, because it is the mirror reflection of his inner life.

Mr. Johnson gives the exact information on all Cotes's recorded works, as well as a full bibliography, and his study is likely to be definitive.

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The government of the Cabinet

By H. C. G. Matthew

J. E. COOKSON:
Lord Liverpool's Administration
1815-1822.
422pp. Scottish Academic Press. £6.

JOHN W. DERRY:
Castlereagh.
247pp. Allen Lane. £7.50
(paperback, £3.75).

British historical writing on the nineteenth century remains predominantly political in interest. Indeed there are indications that the interdisciplinary approach, so fashionable five years or so ago, is on the wane. While some historians have turned to the study of crises as the best way of recording the inner workings of the political system, others have turned to the history of administrations. Given the vast amount of archival and departmental material available, and the extent of historical interest in the policy-making process as it affected individual departments, it is perhaps surprising that there have not been more attempts to study nineteenth-century governments and cabinets in their entirety.

The chief problem in writing the history of an administration is that of focus: it is not easy to deal simultaneously with the relationship of the ministers with their departments, with their followers, with their opponents and with each other, and it is easy for a mere catalogue of decisions to emerge. J. E. Cookson in *Lord Liverpool's Administration 1815-1822* partly solves this problem by leaving out foreign, colonial, and imperial policy, which naturally produces some distortion, especially as regards the position of Castlereagh. He also deals with only one phase of Lord Liverpool's fifteen years of government, from the end of the war to the reorganization of the cabinet following Castlereagh's suicide. Though this is the ministry topped and tailed, it is still a period as long as any until 1818, the Government's handling of the supposed "revolutionary" situation, culminating in the Six Acts, and the second last major crisis of the post-Stuart monarchy.

Dr Cookson maintains a clear focus by looking at the period through the viewpoint of ministers, based on a very thorough and extensive examination of the original sources. He devotes little time to the rank and file, even when they become crucial. The advantage of this approach is that it places events in the perspective of the cabinet of the day, which is not necessarily that of history, particularly Whig history. An obvious problem is that events burst up and down as they occur in correspondence: the long-term nature of policy and the thinking of departments is not so easily perceived. Thus the best sections of Dr Cookson's book are those on the political management of the ministry: the question of the Queen, and the eventual accommodation of Canning. Another problem is that the political nation outside the ministry appears in a blurred light, as ill-defined mass of "respectable opinion" which in reality comprised very varied attitudes. This is especially true in the complex debate on finance and currency, and, ably though Dr Cookson summarizes the Government's options, it is clear that a coherent study of fiscal policy throughout this period is badly needed.

Dr Cookson's book certainly justifies the attempt to write the history of a government. By bringing problems into the relationship which they had chronologically and in the minds of ministers, he has produced an important study of the workings of a cabinet in the last phase of pre-Reform politics, though it must be said the basis for Lord Liverpool's personal ascendancy over his sundry prima donnas remains ill-defined. More work on the relationship of the cabinet to the party might have clarified this point.

John W. Derry's *Castlereagh* is a good deal better suited to the notion of "concise and authoritative" biography than most of those so far discussed in this rather variable series. The reader should not be misled by Dr Derry's intemperate opening and closing attacks on the Radicals—E. P. Thompson, Shelley and Byron in particular—though it is not clear why the first is wrong historically, or why the latter two thought and wrote as they did, though Dr Derry is very insistent that Castlereagh, at least, should be judged by the standards of his time.

The bulk of the book is a lucid exposition of Castlereagh's main

achievements in Ireland, the War Office and the Foreign Office, covering in a sound and readable way ground very thoroughly prepared by Sir Charles Webster and Montgomery Hyde. Dr Derry does not differ greatly in general emphasis from C. J. Bartlett's rather more political study of 1960, though his claims for Castlereagh are a good deal more relentless.

Dr Derry has much to say against Victorian historians, but his high moral tone he could not be one of them. His Castlereagh, seagreen and incorruptible, gallops through life on a white steed, but Dr Derry is a little less insistent on his hero's virtue, his wretchedness and might seem more pathetic. Castlereagh could deal with the Commons but not the nation, but that the latter's fault? His death was, from the Liverpool ministry point of view, highly convenient. Dr Cookson dispassionately shows it allowed a change of style rather than policy (Dr Cookson does not believe in a new liberal Toryism in the 1820s) which did much to prepare the Tory party for the great concessions their leaders were soon to expect of them. This was not, and could never have been, Castlereagh's achievement in politics.

Calling Methodism to order

By Owen Chadwick

W. R. WARD (Editor):
Early Wesleyan Methodism
Administration 1820-1829.
Bunting 1830-1858.
440pp. Oxford University Press. £12.

The Camden Society published in 1972 *The Early Wesleyan Methodism* by J. E. Bunting. This second volume from the same editor, W. R. Ward, covers the most important period in Wesley's life, and in the history of Methodism, the years 1820-1829. This volume, like the first, is based on a collection of 700 letters but found by inquiry several other collections, totalling in all more than 4,000 papers. He has deposited in the library of the University of Durham a typescript of most of these letters and a calendar of the remainder. Here he prints his second selection of 345 letters, hardly any of them used in the official biography of J. E. Bunting.

That was inevitable. The Methodists began as a group dedicated to making the Church of England more capable of saving men's souls. By the logic of events and the law of reformation they became instead a separate denomination. But they

inherited no single religious tradition, were founded in acts of resistance to hierarchical order, and nevertheless felt near to the Church of England and far from old Dissent. Therefore they were plagued with tension, and would have suffered partial disruption whatever the wisdom of their leaders.

Anyone who attempted to bring order, and to create a Church out of a lot of little chapels, was sure to evoke distrust and fear. Bunting possessed the organizing genius which the movement needed. And it makes a peculiar difficulty for religious bodies that the water of life seems to flow with a less pure and less sparkling stream when the engineers direct it into a canal. Methodism contained elements which were of the wilderness, the free word under the open air, the descent of the spirit in a revival that no man could predict. Anyone who tried to organize Methodism needed to take account of charisma among simple men and women. And even if like Bunting he did take account, the world of lawyers and London secretaries and respectable decorum was hardly intelligible to men of the moor and the camp and the love feast.

The conflict concerned the institution of the laity. Did the apostles summon ministers who summoned a people, and authority belong to ministers and to them alone? Or did the spirit call forth a people of God which then chose its representatives? Both these doctrines, which were held by members of Methodist groups, a form of the high doctrine was more faithful to the mind of John Wesley, and the system which he bequeathed. A form of the low doctrine was more compatible with the facts of Methodist life, little chapels depending on local preacher and lay vocation. Bunting steadily stood for a moderate high doctrine as he received it from Wesley's successors. He did all in his power to see that the preachers were ministers canonically ordained. His endeavours permanently marked the later history of Wesleyan Methodism. In a sense the catastrophe when it came was a measure, less of Bunting's failure, than of surprising success against impossible odds.

Still, he liked power and was an autocrat by temperament. He was dually isolated himself from younger men, found with independent minds, attracted flatterers as well as disciples, and at last became pompous. If not insecure, we cannot exclude the great from the causes of their fall. Almost nothing of that side of the man, Malloy addressed to him and not by him, they show him to be and respected, heaping the cares of all the churches.

The editorial notes are admirable. They make a new guide to a whole generation of obscure English letters.

I also doubt whether such research is worth publishing in this form. Although the book is republished, it runs to 440 pages at a price of £8.50, and suffers from the inevitable limitations of these—above all, the lack of any broad historical context. The place for such research is in the doctoral thesis, and in the learned journals designed for such purposes, and in the properly conceived studies of politics, politics and movements which fresh information placed in proper perspective.

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A literature without criticism

By Octavio Paz

Any suggestion that Western literature is a single entity would meet with immediate and justified rejection. What is there in common between the Italian hendecasyllable and English iambic, or between Camões and Hölderlin, or Ronsard and Kafka? But it seems not only reasonable but undeniable that Western literature forms a whole. Each of the units we call English, German, Italian or French literature is not isolated and independent but exists in continuous relationship with the others. Corneille drew on his reading of Juan Ruiz de Alarcón and Shakespeare on Montaigne.

Western literature is a network of mutual relationships: languages, works, authors, styles have always interpenetrated. These relationships work on various levels and in various directions: some are affinities and others oppositions; Chaucer translated the *Roman de la Rose*, but the German Romantics rose up against Racine. Relationships can be temporal or spatial, as shown by Eliot's discovery of the poetry of Laforgue across the Channel, and Pound's encounter with Provencal poetry across the sea of time. All great literary movements have been international, and the great works in our tradition have consequences in other works. Western literature forms a whole lacking in internal struggle with itself, constantly breaking down and reuniting in a series of negations and affirmations which are at the same time reiterations and metamorphoses.

It is a literature in movement and also one which has expanded. Western literature has not only spread to other lands (America, Australia, South Africa) but has also generated other literatures. At one geographical extreme is the Slavonic literature, which was of the wilderness, the free word under the open air, the descent of the spirit in a revival that no man could predict. Anyone who tried to organize Methodism needed to take account of charisma among simple men and women. And even if like Bunting he did take account, the world of lawyers and London secretaries and respectable decorum was hardly intelligible to men of the moor and the camp and the love feast.

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all three, critical thinking is, in itself, limited by imaginative creation, and the act of imagination is in turn a critique of reality. Social landscapes, metaphysical ones, and moral ones: in every case reality is processed twice, once by critical activity and once by the critical act. Spanish American literature is, in simply the expression of our reality, or the invention of another. It is also an inquiry into the reality of these realities.

This constant presence of critical activity—more as an attitude to life than as discursive thought—in the poetry and fiction of our America is no mere accident. It is a characteristic common to all modern Western literatures and its presence is added proof of something doubtless already self-evident: our real historical, linguistic and cultural affiliation with the West, and not with that nebulous "Third World" of our demagogues. We are a pole of the West, an eccentric, impoverished and discordant pole. Critical thought has been the moral and intellectual sustenance of our civilization since the birth of the modern age. It marks the boundary line between modern literature and that of the past. A Calderón play is built on reason, but not on critical thought: its reason is in the utterances of Divine Providence and its realization in the shape of human freedom. In a Balzac novel, however, the action is not shown as something manifesting some ideal logical point but as a story governed by relative causes and circumstances, including human passions and chance. There is an indeterminate zone in modern works which is also a gap: the gap left by former divine certainties now undermined by critical thought. It would be very hard to find a Spanish American work in which this gap does not show up in one way or another. For this reason, our literature is modern, more so than our political and social systems, which ignore critical thought, and usually persecute it.

The answer to our question is less unequivocal if we turn from critical literature or criticism in literature to literary politics, and moral criticism itself. No doubt we have had good literary critics, ranging from Bello and Rodó to Enriquez Ureña and Alfonso Reyes, not to

This weakness, especially obvious in the critical field, has led some of us to wonder whether Spanish American literature is, despite its real or apparent originality, really modern. The question is relevant because critical thinking has been a basic component of modern literature since the eighteenth century. A literature without critical thought is not modern, or if it is, only in a peculiar and contradictory way.

Before answering this question about the absence of critical thinking in Spanish America we must first ask ourselves: does this mean that no critical literature exists in our country? Or does it mean that we have no literary, philosophical or moral criticism? The existence of critical literature seems to me undeniable. Some sort of critical thinking, direct or indirect, social or metaphysical, realist or allegorical, appears in nearly every Spanish American writer. How could one possibly separate novelistic invention and political criticism in the work of Vargas Llosa, for example? The same is true of Borges, who is the exact opposite of Azuela as a writer; and also of Vargas Llosa, who differs enormously from Borges. Borges nearly always centres his stories on a metaphysical point: rational doubt about the reality of what we call reality. They embody a radical critique of certain apparently self-evident notions like space, time, the identity of consciousness, the identity of the individual, and the identity of the story-teller is inseparable from the moral—understood in the French sense as description and analysis, of human, subjectivity. In

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The posthumous fate of Pablo Neruda

By Jorge Edwards

Pablo Neruda was always an autobiographical poet, and, over the years, evoked various stages of his childhood in the south of Chile, his youth in Santiago in the days of student unrest in the 1920s, and his experiences in Spain and of the start of the Civil War—a period which was decisive for his subsequent political development.

Shortly after his return to Chile in 1952, at the end of the McCarthy persecution to which he had been subjected by President González Videla, Neruda gave several lectures on his life and poetry in the *salón de honor* at the University of Chile. This was the first personal encounter my generation had had with Neruda, who previously had been the legendary poet of the East of Republican Madrid and of Mexico, the friend of Lorca and of Paul Eluard, the author of *Resistencia en la tierra*, *España en el corazón* and the early poems of the *Canto general*. These we had read in more or less underground editions, and one of us, taking advantage of the confusion of an official ceremony at the university, had presented them to the smiling González Videla, who thanked him warmly for the gift before he realized what it contained. These lectures at the University of Chile, given early in 1954, form the basis of the first part of Neruda's memoirs, which were published in March 1974 in Barcelona, six months after his death under the title *Confieso que he vivido*.

In 1962 Neruda was commissioned by the Brazilian review *O Cruzeiro Internacional* to write ten long autobiographical pieces under the gen-

eral title "Las vidas del poeta"—once again, on the theme of life and poetry. Years afterwards, when he was the ambassador of Salvador Allende's government in Paris and I was a counsellor at the same embassy, we often spoke about the possibility of his turning this material into a complete and coherent volume of memoirs.

I think that Neruda's attitude to this hypothetical book was fairly complex in 1971, in those early days of the government of Popular Unity. He felt the temptation, but at the same time appreciated the enormous difficulties of writing it. During those exhausting days in an embassy weighed down with problems, harried by visitors, with everyone's eye upon us, the target of continual provocation, we used to talk during the numerous empty moments one finds in diplomatic life: in the waiting-room of a ministry, or while we were going by car to a reception, or waiting for a plane in the official departure lounge at only airport, or one of those centres of amusement (or torment) which we came to know best in our life in Paris. On such occasions Pablo would confess to me that he only felt pleasure writing poetry. He could write short bits of prose, as he had done all his life, ever since the literary criticism he gave in 1920 to *Claridad*, the review of the Chilean Students Federation, but the idea of undertaking a long prose work did not attract him overmuch.

Nevertheless, perhaps because of a presentiment about his own death, his illness had already begun to show itself—his conversation was sprinkled with anecdotes from his



Pottery vessels—a fish, a frog, and a mysterious shelled animal—from Coclé in central Panama. Pre-Columbian Designs from Panama (108pp. Dover/Constable, £2.45) contains 591 illustrations of Coclé pottery taken from the classic book on this strange minor culture, published in 1942, by the anthropologist Samuel Kirkland Lothrop (1892-1965). Coclé is best known for a ceramic style of remarkably high quality, using figures of gods, demons, animals and men as well as abstract motifs, all stylized in the same recognizable artistic convention.

past, with extraordinary evocations of persons and places, from Gandhi and the young Nehru to Ellas Laferte, the old Chilean communist leader, André Malraux, Spanish poets and artists, and the more extravagant characters of the old bohemian days in Santiago. "Put it into your memoirs," I would say to him after just such an anecdote, maybe as we waited in line, in our official costume, for President Pompidou at the ritual New Year ceremony; and he would answer, "Remind me of it when we go back to La Motte-Picquet." (The embassy was and still is—although then it was undecorated, whereas now it is protected by a thick cor-

don of police—at No 2 in that avenue, next door to Les Invalides.) There was also the problem of the susceptibilities which might be wounded by a book of this nature. Anything that Neruda wrote just then, as a former candidate for the presidency of the Chilean Republic in France, as a Nobel prizewinner, would be gone over with a microscope, dissected and criticized. He told me, for example, that he was thinking of telling the story of how Pedro Aguirre Cerda, first president of the Chilean Popular Front, finding himself under pressure from the Right had given a shock order to stop the embarkation of refugees from the Spanish Civil War in 1939. Although Aguirre Cerda finally rescinded this order, the story would not be to the liking of certain members of Aguirre Cerda's party who still supported Popular Unity.

However, there were much more serious difficulties which Neruda could not pass over in silence the problems of de-Stalinization, with which the poet had come into close contact in the case of Soviet writers and in the internal affairs of the Chilean party, nor Neruda's relations with the official writers of Cuba, who had attacked him in an open letter at the end of 1968. He might like that about Aguirre Cerda might still annoy one or two people, his collections in 1971 or 1972 about Santiago or about Cuban intellectuals might have far more serious consequences and would be used,

naturally, by the fierce opposition which Allende's regime was then facing in Chile.

Neruda returned to Chile in November 1972, tired and sick, and never resumed his activities as a diplomat. The coast of Isla Negra, the central area of the country, partially restored his energy. In a letter of April 14, 1973, he told me: "I am writing a lot and well. That is the prescription to be followed on this amazing coast. The region is tonic, vigorous, stimulating like no other. To live anywhere else from now on would seem to me perilsous." At this time he rewrote all the *O Cruzeiro* articles and made good headway with his memoirs, without every. At the beginning of September, a few days before the military coup, he decided to shut himself up in his house at Isla Negra, and not emerge even a week, so as to finish the book within a few months. He wanted the memoirs to be published, together with eight unpublished books of poetry, on July 12, 1974, his seventieth birthday. The coup and, two weeks later, death surprised him in the course, with a notebook full of topics which he had not had time to expand.

All the critical aspects of the memoirs—Neruda's opinions on censorship in the Soviet Union or on the attacks directed against him by Cuban writers—had been worked out with the greatest discretion, in the consent recognition of the fundamental historical contribution made to Latin America by the Cuban Revolution, and leaving no doubt

about the pro-Sovietism he had confessed and reiterated a thousand times. One should not forget that Neruda was writing at a time of intense polarization in Chilean politics, of furious attacks on the government by the right wing and of financial blockade from North America. Despite this, he wrote several passages whose meaning can be better understood today. There are paragraphs which not only strike at right-wing fascism but also at any form of sectarianism or authoritarianism. "I want to live in a world without excommunications," he wrote, under the title "Poetry and Politics".

I shall excommunicate no one. I shall not say tomorrow to that priest, "You can't baptize me, one because you are anti-communist." I shall not say to someone else: "I shall not publish your poem, your creation, because you are anti-communist." I want to live in a world in which human beings are simply human, where that is their only qualification, with no worrying about rules, or words, or labels. . . .

In another paragraph he alludes quite openly to social realism, a school of writing which today rules in Cuba though not under this name and which has never been entirely expelled from the Soviet Union. "Although I like the 'positive hero' met with in the muddy trenches of civil wars by the North American Whites or by the Russian Mayakovsky," Neruda writes in the chapter called "Criticism and Self-criticism".

I also have room in my heart for the mourning-draped soul of Lautréamont, for the soul of knight of Laforque, for the negative soldier of Charles Baudelaire. We must beware of separating the two halves of the apple of creation, for we might cut open our own hearts and cease to exist. Beware!

What is extraordinary is that Neruda's discreet tone in his memoirs, allied to his long fidelity to Soviet communism, does not seem to have helped him much with the neo-Stalinist bureaucrats. From the point of view of censorship, the story of Neruda's memoirs is a painful and revealing. The first manuscripts were sent to Barcelona and Moscow. Neruda had said before he died that he did not want his book to be mutilated by the censor. All the book was left in any way at all. The book was some harsh sentences in Spain, despite some harsh sentences about Francoism and the Civil War; whereas Soviet publishers have the memoirs have incurred separate forms of censorship. In Chile and Cuba, and an uncomfortable silence from the Soviet Union; although in Cuba and in Chile they have been widely read clandestinely. Their fate never has been stated in our conversations of 1973-74, when we were defending Allende's own policy in the Chilean embassy in France.

Recently, Matilde Urrutia, Pablo Neruda's wife, told me how Neruda's house in Isla Negra was entered barely three days after the coup. Neruda was dictating his final chapter, in which he recounts the bombing of the Moneda Palace and

the death of Allende, when the house was surrounded by a whole army detachment. From his sickbed he could see the lines of soldiers in position on the beach, the ready, just in case behind the ships' figureheads and the first editions of Lautréamont and Baudelaire were hidden bands of guerrillas. Matilde told the army commander to start with the poet's bedroom, so that afterwards he could rest. The officer, greeted the poet courteously and Neruda told him to carry out his duties. Since, he appeared somewhat intimidated during the search of the room, Neruda told him: "Search everything. You will find nothing. Yet here very dangerous for you: Poetry!"

The dangers of poetry take effect in various and unforeseeable ways. Bureaucrats know this, which is why they exercise censorship. What they do not know is that censorship does not suffice to ward off the dangers. Poetry's power of survival and infiltration is awe-inspiring. Writing this today in Spain, I might cite the very apt cases of Lorca, Antonio Machado and Miguel Hernández, who are more alive today than forty years ago, on this eve of their deaths.

Several times in his memoirs Neruda describes this power of poetry to penetrate and communicate. To have been for a moment, for many men, a symbol of hope, a heart-rending thing. He writes, in the end, Neruda saw in this his justification as a political poet; but after the revelations of the Twentieth Party Congress about Stalin—perhaps the most revealing of his book these two halves of the apple came back to practising what he called the dark side of poetry. For him as for many others, the tragedy had consisted in the realization that "in various aspects of the Stalin problem, the enemy was right." Neruda did not on this account abandon his basic political beliefs, but he did introduce an element of caution and reflection into them, whose consequences ultimately have been the renunciation of the Soviet Union towards his memoirs.

This is another sign of the times, in an age when Soviet publications frequently censor the texts of called Euro-communism. For this reason, and because of the cuts made in Russia in García Márquez's *Hundred Years of Solitude*, Neruda wrote in his memoirs: "How can we settle these things? I am becoming less and less of a sociologist. Apart from the general principles of Marxism, apart from my antipathy towards capitalism and my confidence in socialism, I understand less and less about the unyielding contradictions of mankind." Neruda had emerged from his Stalinist phase without going back on his fundamental confidence in socialism, but he was far removed from two typical attitudes: from the extremism of the cultured revolution, and from the watchful suspiciousness of the commissars. This is what has earned him his present: twofold or even threefold censorship.

at the tail of the blacklist headed by the name of Jean-Paul Sartre. We were invited to Cuba to testify to the first revolution to preserve intellectual and cultural freedom. But when in the very early case of the poet Padilla's imprisonment, "confession" protests by foreign intellectuals were widespread, we were discarded as friends of the revolution.

Our blacklist is unimportant. Señor Montaner prints, however, a second blacklist of Cuban writers and artists living on the island whose work may not be shown or published. This includes the names of almost every important writer and artist, old and young, from the distinguished elderly poet José Lezama Lima and the magnificent painter, René Portocarrero, to the fine poet who was cultural attaché in London in the 1960s, and José Triana, one of whose plays was presented by our National Theatre. In Havana are deserters of mediocrity. Only Alejo Carpentier, a great forerunner, and one of the great Catholic poets, perhaps, have survived this domestic purging. The genuineness of which

writers' work from recent periodicals. In the intellectual field, I can vouch for Señor Montaner's veracity. Others may be able to support his testimony on other aspects. The book bears signs of the hasty compilation to which its author consents. It disposes once and for all of the legend of the cultured revolution. It does not however attempt to discredit its very real social achievement. Though Señor Montaner has been out of the country for many years his picture of conditions is recognizable to a chief fault lies in its belief that events might have taken a different course. His Christian revolutionaries and peasant resistance are the army of a dream. To the Cuban revolution, the real choice is between national independence with technological progress, which Señor Montaner acknowledges, and a renewed colonialism. Intellectual freedom is a luxury he has never tasted. So his choice is between emigration (which may bring him immediate higher standards of comfort), and the great national endeavour, of which Castro, with his long bombastic speeches, and opportunist

On Castro's blacklist

By J. M. Cohen

CARLOS ALBERTO MONTANER: Informe secreto sobre la revolución cubana. 300pp. Madrid: Sedmay. 300pts.

Carlos Alberto Montaner has compiled a formidable indictment of the Castro revolution and, at the same time, of the CIA-backed elements in Miami who have tried to overthrow it. His loyalties are to a splinter group of Christian revolutionaries who were among Castro's first most part, dead, imprisoned or in exile. His heroes are a group of peasant guerrillas who fought beside Castro in the Sierra and then against him, and who were liquidated because the organizers of the Bay of Pigs invasion did not think them worth supporting.

Señor Montaner, a revolutionary, seems the revolution is

undoubted achievements: improvement of the conditions of the poor, abolition of corruption and of colonialism, improvement in medicine and the social services and in literacy. He refuses to grant it credit, however for its very real anti-racism, claiming that the best jobs are still in the hands of the pure whites. In other fields he has collected much very evidence of prison atrocities, of the suppression of intellectual freedom, of the vicious persecution of homosexuals and of economic blunders. Here his information is circumstantial, though owing to the necessary secrecy of his sources, much of it is uncorroborated. The chief victims of prison torture and assassination have been not old supporters of Batista but Castro's own non-Communist allies of his early years.

On the suppression of intellectual freedom and the anti-homosexual campaign, I can myself, on the strength of visits to Cuba in 1965 and 1968 corroborate, and even expand. Señor Montaner's indictment. Against both, together with most of those foreign intellectuals who were so freely invited to Cuba in the 1960s, I have, where possible, protested. As a result, I find myself

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Céline on the instalment plan

Last week — July 26 to 30 — Céline lovers gathered in Paris for a conference. Thirty scholars from France, Britain, Belgium, Germany, North America and Australia met to hear papers on all aspects of Céline's work — novels and pamphlets. The conference opened quietly but dozens of photographs of Céline were looking down ironically from the walls. He knew there would be trouble.

Sure enough, one M. Robert Faurisson had already started it. He was suspicious of the political slant of the newly-founded Société des études céliniennes. He feared that Céline was falling into the hands of communists who would slander and revile him. This fear came as a particular surprise to the American members, who knew that in New York anyone interested in Céline is still suspected of being a neo-Nazi. True, Céline does have left-wing French admirers who see in his work the destruction of "bourgeois" writing. But this hardly amounts to communist infiltration. Still, M. Faurisson, who himself has a pamphletaire's temperament, plunged on. First he issued diatribes about leftist conspiracies, then he decided to read a paper on the pamphlets, then he decided not to. But he did make many interventions to declare that *Scagelles pour le massacre* is in fact a joyous and gay work. He also proposed a new reading: Céline was attacking the Jew as colonizer; he was thus taking the same stand as the Algerians had taken against the French. So all those who had supported the FLN should be on Céline's side. This strange piece of reasoning — worthy of Céline himself — met with scant sympathy. Henri Godard, who worked on the *Pleins volumes* of Céline, was rightly determined that the Société should not become a haven of the ex-Algérie Française or of the extreme right in general. He rejected the FLN interpretation of Céline, but there was tension in the room. Céline, who once said "the communists have always hated me and so has the right", would have been delighted.

It took a Welshman, Merlin Thomas, to calm things down and then the conference went back to its work. There were so many papers on the use of language and narrative in Céline's novels. Speakers found a subversive element in the storytelling which led Céline to break down character and plot. The

young hero of *Mort à crédit* does not mature; he is desensitized — stripped of his inner life. By juggling his narrators and by fracturing his syntax, Céline criticized traditional fiction. With deliberate and often comic ambiguity, he undermined the so-called real world. He then went on to write a new kind of novel. His tone of delirium was analysed as a conscious artistic device which enabled him to transform his subject. He was trying to communicate his vision of fear and death in a more direct, fearfully personal way than had been done before. Although his world is a strange one, it is always coherent: on this speakers were agreed. Céline was using madness, myth and legend to depict war — since war was for him the one great fact of life. Stress was laid on the later, very difficult novels where the process of transformation has been taken much further: on *Guignol's Band*, where London has become a giant puppet-show, and on *Le Procès de Céline* where the world is a stage and Céline himself is a puppet.

Parallels were drawn between Céline and other modern artists. The hallucination that triggers off *Mort à crédit* was compared with Proust's theme of unconscious memory. The same paper noted that Proust's depiction of the Zeppe in the sky anticipates Céline's use of the word *nuage* to describe the Allied bombing. Further comparisons were made with the French cinema of the 1930s: with Vigo, Duvivier, who thought briefly about filming *L'Orgueil du bout de la nuit*, and with Marcel Carné, whose favourite actress Arletty was Céline's friend. It was remarked that Céline may well have influenced Godard, who also moves directly and rapidly from one level of reality to another.

The psychoanalysts had their moment. They brooded over Céline's strong but dubious sexuality, they talked about latent homosexuality and they attributed his liking for obscenity to anal-aggression. They were fascinated by the episode in *Mort à crédit* where the young Ferdinand tries to murder his father with — appropriately enough — a writer. Yet they sensibly refused to be dogmatic. They could not be drawn into saying that Céline was mad or ill or abnormal. They agreed that he himself saw his life as a disastrous failure and that he created other selves in order to escape from or overcome it.

In general the conference showed courage. One speaker had run through Céline's books through a computer in order to study his use of direct and indirect speech. Another was endeavouring to translate him into German — an awesome task — and was preparing herself by reading Günter Grass whose language is rather like Céline's. The Société's energetic secretary Jean-Pierre Dautin outlined plans for a dictionary of Céline's language, publication of his letters, a journal and a volume of criticism on the puzzling *Le Procès*. All this is to be done with the cooperation of Gallimard who, having turned down *Poésie* in 1932, are now hoping to make money out of Céline. Céline, who royally abused Gallimard, would not have been surprised and indeed prophesied that this would happen.

The tone of the conference was

Patrick McCarthy



Two legendary Zen sages, Kamezan and Jitoku: a detail from one of a pair of Japanese hanging scrolls in the collection of Mary and Jackson Scott. The figures stand at the edge of a cliff, with the bottom of the scroll, at least two thirds of which is taken up with cloud and space. Attributed to Rinsai, the scrolls are an example of Japanese ink painting of the Muromachi period — from the fourteenth to the sixteenth century — and are reproduced in Japanese Ink Paintings (300pp, Princeton University Press, £27.80, paperback, £12.50), edited by Yoshiko Shimizu and Carolyn Wheelwright. This book records the exhibition of ink paintings from the Muromachi period in American collections mounted this year by the Art Museum, Princeton University, in honour of Professor Shafiro Shimada.

Fifty years on...

From a review by T. S. Eliot of Thomas Dekker's *Plague Pamphlets* in the TLS of August 5, 1926: The literature of Plague is not a large one — for the English reader there hardly exist more than Defoe's *Journal* and Poe's "Masque of the Red Death"...

The two examples mentioned above gain their effect by structure and by their rates of speed. Poe produces his effect by suddenness and what may be called "expected surprise", united with a sense of retribution. Defoe's effect is due to an aggregation of small detail producing a final unity. The tone of every anecdote is projected into the next, and so on. One is continuously the spectator of the slow creeping of infection from parish to parish, of a more and more intolerable movement which one can neither arrest nor accelerate. Dekker's pamphlets are a collection of vivid passages interspersed with the sagas of the purple meditation in which his age indulged itself. The difference between Dekker and Defoe is partly due to the fact that in Dekker's age there were few statistics, whilst Defoe is, as we all know, a man of figures. The Weekly Bills, both for statements of fact and for those figures of the numbers of deaths without which the peculiar movement of his *Journal* would have been impossible. Statistics form the skeleton of the *Journal*; Defoe was one of the first to attempt and to succeed in that boasted enterprise of "making statistics interesting".

But there is another difference between Dekker and Defoe, which makes us find for Dekker a distant relationship to Boccaccio, and a nearer relationship to the ordinary teller of fabliaux. For Defoe the plague is a "visitation", virtually a sign from Jehovah of His wrath; for Dekker it is merely the occasion for meditation upon death and the brevity and uncertainty of human life, and for tales which are as often as not "merry" ones. One of the most interesting of the pamphlets is "The Meeting of Gallants at an Ordinarie". The gallants are named, as we might expect, Signors Shutelescock, Ginglespurge, Stramson and Kicksnow. As the part of these gentlemen remarks, "I love to hear Tales when a merrie Corpulent Host bundles them out of his Plopmouth"; and the host, the traditional comic figure, treats his "gallant" Bullyes of five and twenty first to a tale of wit and humour: "such a ridiculous humour of dying was never heard of before". But even the more "pathetical" tales are lighter than Defoe's; they are with a moral, they are careless of the great moral of Defoe, they belong to a more reckless and a tougher world.

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Communities of chromosomes

By C. D. Darlington

ROBERT ARDREY:
The Hunting Hypothesis
232pp, Collins, £4.50.

Since the last war new knowledge has poured in upon us from many new sciences whose value an older generation must find it useless. One of the sciences which has given us up to date with this knowledge is Robert Ardrey.

Mr Ardrey is an American who began as a zoologist in Chicago and later became a successful playwright. But he deserted the theatre more than twenty years ago for a more sustained project. It was no less than to search out the roots of human action by studying the evolution of man and his behaviour. He began with his own observations (in Africa) and with meeting the people (in Europe and America) whose discoveries seemed to him to matter most. He has given himself in this way an instructive experience. As an independent and articulate inquirer he has moved about freely in a world which is more and more tightly packed with less articulate specialists locked up in the intellectual security of university departments.

Mr Ardrey's *African Genesis* led him to *Territorial Imperative* and *The Social Contract*. *The Hunting Hypothesis* repeats much that was in the earlier books but with new evidence. It sounds as fresh, as lively and as personal as ever. The conclusions he reaches come from many sources and some are his own. But it is not altogether easy to assess their value. Ardrey has a dramatic immediacy as well as an anecdotal touch which makes him easy for the reader who wants to be entertained, but difficult for the reader who wants to be informed — or happens to be informed already.

We must swallow our pedantry, however, if we are to discover Ardrey's message. By intelligence, by temperament and by education he is an evolutionist. By thinking, talking and writing evolution, he has become, like others before him, obsessed with the idea. In order to sort Ardrey out from this obsession we have to recall that while he has been hard at work others also have been busy and the world has not stood still. In the first place we must be clear that serious thought about evolution is not, and never has been, unified or established as he supposes. Ardrey would therefore do better not to thrust his authorities down our throats, even though he does know them personally. To be sure, his cardinal assumptions of natural selection, random variation and the genetic individuality of individuals and mild do not need to be disputed.

The fallacies that he denounces are also often very properly denounced. But it is a pity he often cannot give his reasons. Take, for example, the notion that "culture" is something that descends from heaven and has no origins in human achievement. That you and I, through cultural intervention are

protected from further biological evolution is a fallacy of utmost importance. But he fails to supply the argument, even though he cannot afford to leave it so. For on this fallacy the modern social sciences (which he has torn to pieces in his *Social Contract*) have been largely built. So much so that the word "culture" is now widely used in human affairs with euphemism for the Darwinian word "race" which is now disallowed or taboo. Moreover this theory of "cultural intervention" owes its most formal statement to Julian Huxley who enthused the fallacy in the unfortunate term "psychosocial" evolution. This was in the second edition of his *Evolution* (1963), a work which Ardrey on a later page describes as "an 'imply volume'". One's confidence in the author is shaken when he quotes with admiration works which he has not taken care to understand.

The root of the matter, however, goes much deeper. In the past forty years a new system of evolutionary thought has been built in which Ardrey's phrases are out of place and out of date. It traces its beginnings to the time and work of Darwin. It is a system in which plants and animals are reciprocally connected and man has come to play a crucial part. It is a system which is widely outside the world-view of naturalists that Ardrey introduces to us.

The change in our ideas has been a slow one. It began five years after Darwin's death when a visitor to the British Association meeting at Manchester pointed out something that had only just been discovered, namely that the crustacean evolution in the whole of evolution from Darwin's point of view happened long before Darwin's fossil record began. It was the origin of sexual reproduction.

Sexual reproduction with its microscopic processes was the common starting point of plants and animals. The speaker, a man zoologist named Weismann, explained that its success was in his opinion due to an amazingly simple new principle, its effect in recombining hereditary differences in the progeny. This is a property which we all know (though Ardrey does not seem to know it) and man. Recombination was an idea that Darwin had lacked in his attempt to explain how natural selection and heredity were connected in the evolution of plants, animals and man. In consequence, the living objects of this selection were not just the competing individuals that Darwin and his followers had imagined them to be. They were also communities. Interest in the cooperation and competition extended indefinitely forward in time. In a word, the conflict between selfishness and altruism which Ardrey argues about (and Kropotkin also before Ardrey was born) has always been a part of an undivided community of plants in animals and plants — and in man.

In the course of the ninety years which followed this hypothesis, it has proved to be the most important new idea in biology since Darwin. It has, we may say, been established by its very considerable influence.

One by one it has thrown off new sciences. The chromosome theory and the theory of the gene, ecology and population genetics, the pursuit of genetic systems and the double helix of great renown, all came out of it. These new methods and theories have become involved in the whole study of life. So we have now (hardly noticing) instead of trying to explain evolution in terms of contemporary life, we find ourselves explaining life in terms of evolution. And heredity itself, which was seen as a mechanism living and evolving.

In this development man himself, after long delays, has become one might say, absorbed. It is a time when it became possible in the past twenty years for a million human beings to have their heredity, in the shape of their chromosomes, examined under the microscope. It has been a medical job, but it is its worldwide scale and its analytical implications. For in this way, without experiment, the human

species has yielded knowledge which had come earlier in plants and animals but only with experiment. Our internal relations, as between men, women and child, our external relations with all other animals, our enduring relations with the multi-farious world of disease, have all acquired evolutionary connections by way of their material and indeed ideas have been extensively published, often in popular form.

For Ardrey's project, a second important question is what steps intervened between the origin of sexual reproduction, the remote first mixing of chromosomes, and the appearance of man only five or six million years ago. We can now point to the most momentous of these steps, momentous in relation to our lives today. This was the immediate separation of plants and animals and their consequent divergence of two ways of life. Plants storing the sun's energy, and animals consuming this energy. They have done so by eating the plants, or one another; or when man intervened (very recently as Ardrey points out) by his burning of plants; or again, last of all and now most overwhelmingly, by his turning up the earth's long-stored, hidden supply of fuel.

A second great step was one which took place only 100 million years ago. It depended on a double change: a single community of plants which led to the invention of the flower. This was an invention which baffled Darwin. He saw how crucial the problem was for the development of his ideas and wrote three books about it, books which have been read by zoologists. In the course of this century, however, the riddle they set has been solved.

Why, it may be asked, should the evolution of the flower or indeed of plants at all have anything to do with Mr Ardrey's hypothesis? There are several reasons. In the first place, the flower, which made possible the origin of the flowering plants, has been found to conceal a double device. The style in which the pollen is brought, and may or may not be, is a mechanism for controlling breeding and hence what is known in man as the kinship and ancestry of the family. It turns out that it is based, as Darwin rightly suspected, on certain genetic differences in the pollen. The plant itself, as human societies do, both inbreeding and outbreeding; it includes at once incest and promiscuity. It has the suggestive effect of avoiding useless or deviant progeny. The plant does so by chemical and mechanical means, as opposed to the instinctive and moral means used by man and other animals. This is a contrast which makes the plant a very good model for the study of the most descriptive work of anthropologists, and also of Robert Ardrey, into the general picture of organic evolution.

How the progeny of the flowering plants are raised, depends on a second and older process of seed formation. This is a gestational pregnancy, like that of mammals and insects, but it is a process of development to develop later, but involving a peculiarly sophisticated trick. For side by side with the embryo in the seed, a dummy embryo, a half-sister, is produced by an extra and parallel act of fertilization.

This dummy embryo is genetically intermediate between the mother and the true embryo. It is a mother for nothing else but to serve for the cannibal nutrition of its half-sister.

In this way the flowering plants have developed a system of breeding which controls both the heredity and the environment of the next generation. In doing so they have shown us that the contrast between heredity and environment which we use for our own purposes in experiment is subordinated in nature, and also in society, to the uses of evolutionary change. It is a system which, on account of its long-term success, is one of the most successful of any one individual, but of a community — expenditure over the generations which have followed.

The origin of the flowering plants' transition from the first vegetation of the earth. But secondly, by creating the area and

the grain, the fruits and the leafy forest, it set the stage for the transformation of the animal world. The mammals and the birds, the division of the mammals into herbivores and carnivores, rapidly followed. All the new mammals (and the birds hardly less) depended in turn for their success on imitating the policy of gestation, and of extending parental care, the principle of providing a kindred or genetic environment. All of this in turn was to be carried to its extreme in the diverse developments of human society.

The issues that Ardrey argues are concerned with one part of this last stage of our own evolution. But they are issues connected, as we can now see, in every detail with what went before. When he arrives at the right conclusion it is because his principles are those that apply not just to man but to the whole of nature. For example, when he says that "primate sexuality was the consequence not the cause of primate sociality" he is discovering a principle which has been true of all plants and animals since their common origin. Man has all along been using the hereditary materials and devices that nature had tested before he or the primates arrived.

Again Ardrey need not get worked up about why man diverged from the apes to become a hunter. What is of interest is the fact that this divergence went hand in hand with the development of the human brain and of the intelligence which was carried by that brain. While the apes stood still, man was transformed continually in one direction.

How did he do it? This is the question that Ardrey attempts to answer. But there are two answers, the first, it has been known since Darwin that the brain has been continually growing and differentiating throughout the history of the vertebrates. Since Darwin, for seventy years, no one has needed to doubt that this evolution was due to the long term effects of natural selection.

The second answer concerns the divergence. It is a commonplace that animal and plant groups divide themselves into near and distant relatives. Some are shelled and little minorities that go forward. Obviously the apes were shelled. Man, or rather men and women, went forward. And they did so on account of their inventions. By these inventions some of which Ardrey describes with enthusiasm, men and women transformed their environment. Each invention made others more advantageous. We do not nowadays need to dig up fossils to discover these inventions. Unless we live in seclusion we see them happening around us every day. We see their causes and we enjoy or suffer their consequences. The things we make take control of us — as Goethe and Mary Shelley were already aware. They have been doing so over the past five million years with a gathering force which has now become overpowering.

Mr Ardrey considers that these processes are many of the kind readers will like to hear, both mysterious and "uniquely human". They are neither. On the contrary the principles concerned are mechanically clear and biologically universal. One of the first things we pointed out by Alfred Russel Wallace in his joint paper with Darwin in 1858. Wallace then compared natural selection to the action of the governor in a steam engine, something that Darwin probably did not know about.

By this analogy Wallace clearly meant that the kind of selection that stops us changing, what we call stabilizing selection; or to be even more mechanical, negative feedback. But it is the opposite effect of destabilizing selection that gives change and evolution. It may be at random or it may take a positive feedback. It then gives the evolutionary trend that we see in the giraffe's neck, in the horse's foot, in the bird's beak, in the vertebrate, especially the human brain. The reason for all these trends is the same. There is no mystery about it. One change so improves the situation of the plant, or animal, or man, that it makes further changes in the same direction advantageous.

Why does Mr Ardrey miss these points? Apparently he is carried

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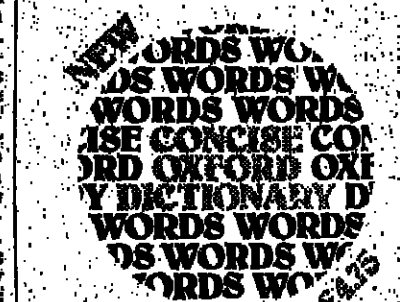
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...puede ser completamente verdad".
He stayed for a while in Cuba, then
went back to Spain. He died in Bar-
celona in 1944, where he is buried
with his secretary in the Cemetery
de las Cortes. "Departamento 5,
Nicho 7417".

Vargas Vila would have wished
one to make an end of this account
of a gallant and spectacular life
with one of his favourite phrases,
"nunca claudicaba"—"he never
surrendered". But it is unfortu-
nately not exactly the case: he did
once attempt to surrender. It is
strange that of all the dictators of
his time there is one that he never
attacked—Juan Vicente Gómez of
Venezuela. This may have been be-
cause Palacio Viala had diplomatic
ambitions, or because Gómez had
ended the presidential career of
Cipriano Castro; despite his very
Vargasvilesc style Castro had been
his opponent in the Venezuelan poli-
tics of the 1890s. Perhaps it was an
insurance, a bribe. In 1925 he wrote
from Havana to Laureano Vallenilla
Lanz, the ideologue of *Gomecismo*
and editor of Gómez's principal
newspaper *La Nueva Era*, proposing
to "crown his work" with a life of
Bolívar. First-class cabins, first-
rate hotels and expensive gestures
had run through his flagging royal-
ties. He had never saved. His
fascination with Bolívar, he con-
fessed, was not entirely disinter-
ested:

I am not an eater of cinders, that
I can feed myself on that handful
of ash called Glory
I must live
And I have nothing to live on ...
that is the Imperative Dilemma;
And at sixty-six, that is a Fearful
Problem.

In private letters, he maintained
his declamatory public style, but the
content is here more than a little
changed. He did not get the money,
and the world is one life of Bolívar
the less.

There are still more than
one hundred books, and rumours
of more unpublished, including a
very lengthy and very scandalous
diary left behind somewhere in
Mexico or Cuba. Vargas Vila was
always a man of many parts,
frequently pretentious, egotistical,
and remonstrative to a ridiculous
degree, and a serious evaluation of
his work and its importance is not
well served by the continuing
republications of his *Obras Com-
pletas*. A small anthology would
show him at his best, and would
make it easier to explain the
attraction he had for many of the
better writers of his time, and the
enormous liberating effect he has
had on generations of adolescent
readers since. He has an undeniably
important place in the history of
his culture.

That culture cannot be under-
stood without its rhetoric, and
rhetoric cannot be neatly separated
from ideology. Vargas Vila was the
foremost Latin American exponent
of a style of political invective that
derived above all from Victor Hugo,
particularly the Hugo of *Les
Châtiments* and *Napoléon le Petit*.
Hugo's influence in Spanish
America was immense, and Vargas
Vila was one of many disciples. The
Buenos Aires-born Juan de
Chilean Francisco Bilbao, his own
friend and countryman, Juan de
Dios Uribe, were earlier imitators,
but none of these is still as read-
able as Vargas Vila at his height.
He never lost the ideological
climate of his youth, and the events
of 1884 and 1885 left him with a
bitterness that gives his attacks on
the victors a particularly poisonous
bite. His portraits of the architects
of Conservative reaction in Colom-
bia, of the sceptic Rafael Núñez and
the ultramontane polymath Miguel
Castaño, are as scathing as any
that have been written.

Castaño was a poet, a grammarian
and a classical scholar, a translator
of Virgil. For Vargas Vila he was
a literary hyena from the Roman
period. He had disintegrated the
remains of illustrious poets. He
adorned himself with their bones
like some Mozambique chieftain.
He scattered them round about to
show his insatiable appetite as a
scholarship boy.

Hay dos cosas insuperables en
él: la tiranía y la gramática.
Y hay dos cosas que le son absolu-
tamente imposibles: hacer un buen
gobierno, y un buen verso.
Sus cáculos como sus rimas, son
igualmente desastrosos y áridos.
No ha tenido sino una voluptuosidad
en su vida: violar las Musas.
Y las tiene ya domesticadas a su
caricia brutal.
En un momento de su vida, él
se entregó a la poesía, pero no
sufrió ninguna transformación, y
sigue siendo el mismo hombre.

...la pautación con may-
...caracterización que el delito
durante el Gobierno de los Liberales
tuvieron el triste consueño de
ser fustigados con todas las
leves gramaticales, a falta de
otras leyes.

His contemporary Philippines *Los
Cesáres de la Decadencia* and *Los
Dioses y Los Humanos* fixed for
succeeding generations the image
of a whole gallery of villains and
heroes. As a young man, the
Colombian poet Rafael Maya saw
Vargas Vila on his visit to Barran-
quilla, and in an essay forty years
later asked what had been the
impact of this "hombre... sencill-
mente espectacular, grotesco, sub-
lime, cómico y transcendental".

I don't say that all this preaching
was without result. On the con-
trary, our democracies will always
retain an echo of the voice of
Vargas Vila. The people loved
him, and still love him, not
because these books still matter,
but for the resonance of those
political campaigns, a resonance
which still prolongs itself through
time. *La demagogia seguirá arran-
cando ramos de los laureles rojos
que crecen sobre su tumba*.

This is an exact observation, for
there is hardly a populist who does
not see him, in egotism, in the
appearance of intransigence, in that
essential vagueness of what exactly
he is about. "Yo no soy un hombre,
soy un pueblo", the lemma of José
Martí, of Jorge Eliécer Gaitán, is
Vargas Vila at his most providential.
There is much of him too in the
historicism of Perón, much in the
political Neruda—to Neruda's credit,
in his case the influence is openly
acknowledged, even affirmed. His
style of political writing, in its
relentless invective and righteous-
ness, with its magic allusions to
superior culture and privilege,
insight, has not only been appropri-
ated by the left: the Colombian
Conservative Laureano Gómez, the
most formidable demolisher of a
republican never short of orators, had
obviously learnt lessons of this mas-
ter; by the chance of inheritance
some of his *derechos de autor* went
after his death to finance Gómez's
paper *El Siglo*.

The less political works have worn
less well, and many have not worn
at all. The early novels, whose pro-
vincial settings and erotic pessimism
come from Jorge Isaacs's *María* over-
laid with Zola, are still read. They
cannot much longer keep the same
of rebelliousness that has kept them

The banana belt

By David Brading

RALPH LEE WOODWARD, JR.
Central America
A Nation Divided
344pp. Oxford University Press.
£7.25 (paperback), £2.25.

Without a sharp focus on the
contours, any attempt to de-
scribe the history of five countries
across four centuries is likely to
dissolve into a blur of details.
From his treatment of the colonial
period, where the high quality of
recent research has proved of great
assistance, Ralph Lee Woodward has
unfortunately chosen to concentrate
on political chronicle to the exclu-
sion of any serious examination of
changes in society or the economy.
Indeed, on such themes he is quite
deaf to numerical control, so that
the point is lost that "bananas
produced" and "somewhat later
that there was" a startling increase
in population. Moreover, although
he inserts the subtitle "a nation
divided", he never explains why the
heterogeneous communities of Cen-
tral America should be regarded as
a nation in his account and origi-
nal. Confederation which was set up after
independence was broken apart by
the armed revolt of conservative
leaders opposed to the liberal
regime based on Guatemala City.
The evidence suggests that apart
from their policy towards the
Church there was little to distin-
guish the parties other than their
strong sectional loyalties.

Similarly, despite a slow evolution
from liberalism towards some form
of positivism, the dictatorial nature
of presidential government went
unchanged. To learn that "Laccho"
Somosa started off in politics as a
non-politician is certainly surprising,
but surely not enlightening without



Colombian soldiers of the civil war of 1885

going, and which they so well
deserved when they first appeared.
Some remain remarkable curiosi-
ties: *Los Pájaros*, 1903, has a sexual
explicitness very advanced for the
time; it also carries references to
Darwin, Lombroso, Fichte, Blangui,
Jaurès, Grève, Tolstoy, William
Morris, Gorki, Leopardi, Alme-
da and Burne-Jones, to give
only an incomplete list, and its
social content covers the entire
stock-in-trade of the novel of social
protest for many years after.

Whatever the artistic failings of
such works, they performed more
cultural tasks than the *novela*; some-
thing of the schoolteacher
always remained in Vargas Vila,
to balance the priest and the *alcade*,
and few can have had as many
pupils. He would have preferred to

be remembered as in this quotation
of Vargas Vila by Arturo Escobar
Uribe: *El Divino Vargas Vila*
Bogotá, 1968. The essay by Rafael
Maya appeared in the *Boletín Cul-
tural y Bibliográfico* of the Biblio-
teca Luis Ángel Arango, Vol. VIII,
No. 5. I was able to see his letters
to Laureano Vallenilla Lanz through
the kindness of Señora Beatriz
Vallenilla and Nikita Harvati
Vallenilla.

There is a useful critical biography
of Vargas Vila by Arturo Escobar
Uribe: *El Divino Vargas Vila*
Bogotá, 1968. The essay by Rafael
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some analysis of the persistence of
slavery. After all, the subject
is a major theme in the literature
of the region. It is the growth in the
power of the state rather than any
purported rise of the "middle sec-
tors" which demands discussion.

In dealing with the economy Pro-
fessor Woodward emphasizes the
cycle of export crops—cacao, indigo,
bananas, coffee and cotton—which
in large measure sustained urban
society and the state. But historic-
ally Central America divided into
two zones, the one encompassing the
settled Mayan peasantry of the high-
lands of Guatemala and parts of
Honduras, and the other, the dis-
persed, more backward tribes of
Costa Rica, Nicaragua and the rest
of Honduras. During the early col-
onial period, as Murdo Macleod
has recently argued, the Spaniards
were far more concerned to sum-
mon Indian labour contingents down
to the coastal cacao groves than to
establish haciendas in the hills. As
far as we can ascertain, the Mayan
villages have retained possession of
their ancestral territory until the
present day. Elsewhere, as the indi-
genous population disappeared in
the face of disease, *ladinos* or mes-
tizo smallholders and squatters
moved in. It is significant that in
the late eighteenth century the
wealthiest men in the colony were
not the *criollo* landowners but
rather the immigrant Peninsular
merchants who handled the export

of indigo, a substance produced on
small farms.

Only in the closing decades of
the last century did the drive for
new export crops at last seriously
encroach on peasant agriculture.
But even then the United Fruit
Company located most of its banana
plantations on the relatively de-
serted coastlands of the Caribbean,
importing labourers from the British
West Indies. The result was a
classic enclave economy, isolated
more closely to New York and
London than to León and Tegucigalpa.
But despite the application
of the term "banana republic" to
most countries in this area, in fact
coffee was the chief export, save in
Honduras. It was to procure land
for coffee plantations, many owned
by Germans and other foreigners,
that governments in El Salvador
and Guatemala enacted legislation
similar to our Enclosure Acts, which
deprived many smallholders of
their matas plots. Nevertheless,
although the plantations have
attracted the attention of travellers
and reformers alike, we should
never ignore the survival of the
subsistence farmer, whom David
Browning aptly dubs the "invisible
presence" in the countryside. Here,
as elsewhere in Latin America,
the co-existence (and interpenetra-
tion) of the two types of agricul-
ture which renders agrarian society
so complex and explosive.

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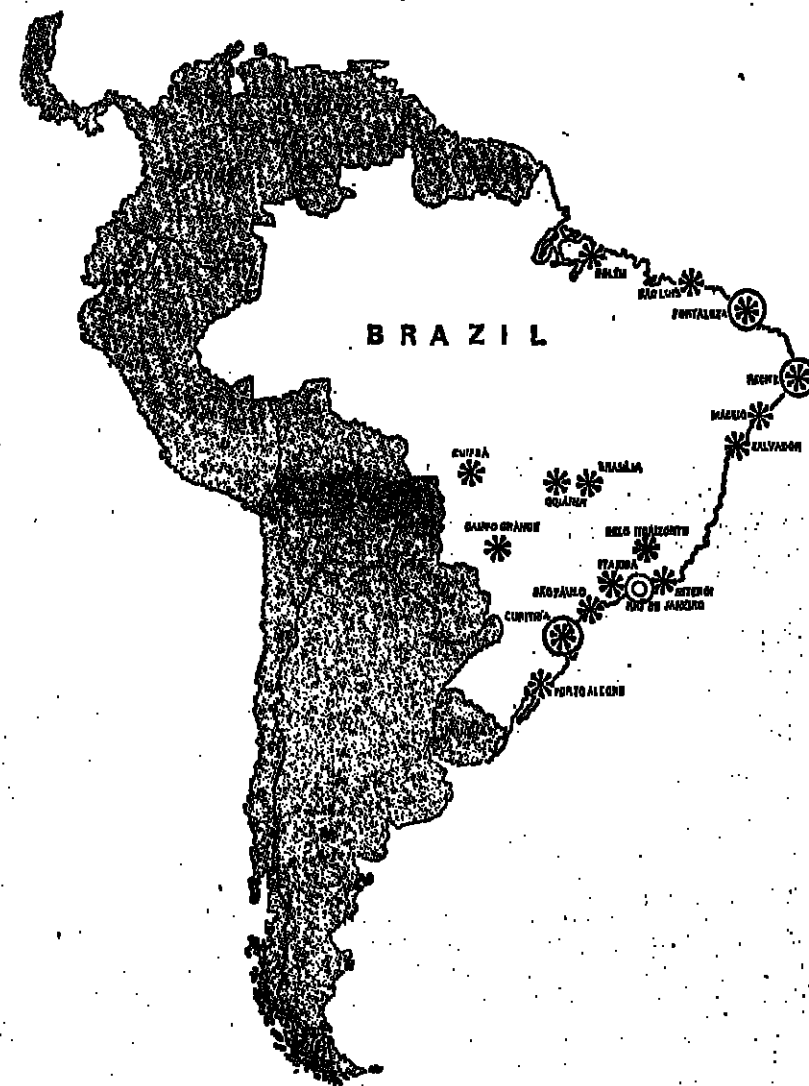
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The success story of Venezuela

By Hugh Thomas

ROMULO BETANCOURT:

El petróleo de Venezuela
Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica.

"If it were possible in political history to speak of masterpieces as we do with works of art, the process of Italy's independence, liberty and unity would deserve to be called the masterpiece of the liberal national movements of the nineteenth century." Thus did Croce, in his *History of Europe in the Nineteenth Century*, speak of Italy for a generation of optimists. There is a similar passage at the end of Trevor's *Carthage and the Thousand*. Of course, fascism was to show the flaw in this crystal and the achievements of the Risorgimento gain little applause today. But Croce's view has its defenders still. In the present century, what comparable achievements can be invoked to cheer the liberal national movements? India? Until last year an obvious candidate, but no longer. Nowhere in Africa, Mexico? The secret was in which the inevitably successful candidates for presidency are chosen in the smoke-filled rooms of the absurdly named "Institutional Revolutionary Party" is about as liberal as was the nomination of a pope during pontificacy. Brazil? Little more than a small surety. Too poor and too much violence in the interior.

What about Venezuela? Venezuela is a good candidate. Of course, no one would deny that there is still great poverty in the country, but so there was in Europe in 1910. Certainly, half the population of twenty million is under twenty and the problems of such an absurdly young country are naturally disturbing. True, the oil which made Venezuela for a long time, before Saudi Arabia got going, the world's largest exporter will soon be used up. The white marble houses of the rich may seem something of an affront to those of us who have become used to a world in which only government departments or universities, or institutes for the study of this or that indulge in really ostentatious display. We live in a society a little afraid of archaisms. Of course, the traffic in Caracas is bad, the petrol is too cheap and a metro would be a great help. The crime rate is high and the social services leave much to be desired.

Even so, if we are honest with one another there is surely nowhere in Latin America where it is possible to breathe the real air of freedom as it is in Venezuela. The constitution works, and has seen three presidents giving up power to their freely elected successor in the past eighteen years. The rule of law prevails and the judiciary is independent. Thanks not only to oil, but also to the enormous hydro-electric possibilities of the great rivers which run into the Orinoco and to generous mining royalties, there is a genuine sense that the governments of the next twenty years will have the means to establish a modern economic infrastructure and to wipe out poverty during that time. Venezuela is undoubtedly one of the few success stories in the world in the past twenty years or so.

Why has this happened? Well, of course, money must play a part, though it cannot be the whole or even a decisive part of the answer. But the money has been made in 1976, not in 1958, and Venezuela's per capita income in 1958, when its political troubles broke out, was greater than Peru's. Perce's income was less than that of many countries which today suffer under dictators. And if it is not a matter of per capita income, the figures for which usually detect the trends of political stability in Britain, figures which could not, not play a very large part. He was concerned with the political life of the nation, not with the fact that the new master class of 1958 forced the English to pay attention to them. Now there is no

doubt that since 1958 the Venezuelans have become good at elections. I witnessed the last stages of the presidential elections in Venezuela in 1973 and it was obvious that his rule in the repertoire of United States politics, were mirrored from Venezuela. But, also from personal observation, I know that Chileans, too, loved parliamentary politics and many were mature enough there to see that for them to work there has to be an element of play involved. But, alas, poor Chile!

Three things perhaps, apart from oil, help to explain the success of Venezuela. First, the tradition of Bolívar who, in spite of generations of repression, never ceased to inspire the young. Second, the existence of a bourgeoisie-minded democracy which always existed even if they often spent the best years of their lives in exile or chained up in General Gómez's prisons. Second, the absence of a major Indian problem, combined with a particularly successful relationship between blacks and whites, the Spanish immigrants of long standing and the others (Italians, English and more recently, central Europeans) who have made here, as elsewhere in Latin America, major contributions to commercial and public life.

The third factor is the capture of political power in the late 1950s and 60s by a generation of experienced, able, high-minded men who are the nearest in temperament to Latin Americans to our own Whigs.

The best known of this generation of Venezuelan statesmen is, of course, Romulo Betancourt, the organizer of the present ruling party, Democratic Action, and also the first Venezuelan president in history to retire from office into private life. *El petróleo de Venezuela* is a brief anthology of his recent speeches and writings with commentary added, and it tells one a good deal about this remarkable leader, whose gravely voice has only to mutter the words "fellow citizens" to achieve an immediate mastery over any audience large or small. Betancourt is the son of an immigrant from the Canary Islands. He led the students against the dictator Gómez and spent a short time in the tiny communist party of Venezuela before founding the Democratic Action in the late 1930s. He was head of the government for the first time in the three years of democracy in

1945-48, and then returned as president from 1959-64.

This book is much lighter than his usual style. Venezuela, politics, a *petróleo* (first published in 1955) in *Puerto Rico*, during one of Betancourt's many periods of exile, but five things stand out from it, as from most of Betancourt's prose: a clear focus for words (and freedom from jargon); a dedication to democracy; a genuine pride in being Venezuelan and a consequent disciplined resentment of the multinational oil companies which, for many years, in Venezuela as elsewhere, bilked the country of a fair share in profits; a well-informed professionalism so far as the politics of oil are concerned; and, finally, a genuinely cultivated mind, rarely indulging in pedantic or pedantic passages, but the fruit of years of reading and study in exile.

It would, of course, be wrong to suppose that Betancourt was the only architect of Venezuela's democratic revolution, important though his role was. His chief opponent, Rafael Caldera, president between 1969 and 1974, was the creator of the Christian democratic party which he held together skillfully during the time of repression and then successfully transformed, along with Democratic Action, into a mass party. Several other remarkable men, too, have played creative parts in the history of modern Venezuela. I think in particular of Pérez Alfonso, half sage and half man of action, Betancourt's oil minister and as such the main force behind the invention of the *petróleo*; or of General Alfonso Rivas, for many years the inspired manager of the Guyana Development Corporation in the Orinoco region and now the first president of the nationalized oil concern.

Where, however, Betancourt and the leaders of Democratic Action (among them, Gonzalo Barrios, the defeated candidate in 1969 and now president of the Senate; the now deceased ex-president, León Betancourt's successor; and the present energetic president Carlos Andrés Pérez, the first plain Pérez I think, to achieve power in a Hispanic country) seem to have made an admirable team, the history of the government for the first time in the three years of democracy in

representative democracy has shown itself inadequate, in Venezuela as elsewhere, to solve the social problems of an underdeveloped country. The first argument is difficult to sustain in respect of a country which has just taken over the oil industry in the face of universal criticism. The second point needs to be faced. But there is a clear answer. We have, in the past twenty-five years, accumulated all too readily, perhaps, the materialist argument that liberty is poor; and very much if you are poor; and that accordingly heavy investment in social services must seem to a conscientious person to be more important than formal liberty. Yet political freedom is the banner which exerts a spell among the poor; of it is middle-class revolutionaries who prefer discipline and tyranny.

Modern Venezuela is a mixed society. Certainly, it has become very rich very quickly in the ten years, too quickly some would say for the wealth to be properly absorbed. There are serious shortages of "middle managers" and it will probably be a long time before the large investment in foreign courses for students will begin to yield results. No one can feel very happy when looking at the *ranchos*, the small squatter growths which shoot up between the houses of the rich, presenting serious social and criminal problems. But the vigour and imagination of the Venezuelan society is undeniable, its social conscience is strong, and above all the country has a political system which has both outlived the memory of military dictatorship and survived a challenge by the communist revolutionary left. I have no doubt that it will survive the shocks which it is receiving at the present time with the complications from the Nieuhaus affair and the disgraceful death at the hands of the police of a Socialist leader.

A country with a population as small as Venezuela's cannot really offer its system as exemplary for the rest of the world. But it is all of which it has at one time or another, tried representative democracy and seen it fail. It is also too early, after less than twenty years of freedom, to conclude that a political miracle has been achieved in Venezuela. A little longer is needed. But even now it does not strain credulity, nor force words beyond their proper compass, to say that the Venezuelan political system is a work of art.

The explanation for this curious oversight is that on the one hand Venezuela seems to many over-rich, too Americanized, rather like a bigger Puerto Rico, as Darcy Ribera argued; and on the other that professionally in the late nineteenth century. And, throughout, the emphasis is very heavily on the army, with a consequent neglect of the other armed forces.

Since, in the nineteenth century, on the international plane, control of the sea meant control of the land, and the Chilean navy was the decisive factor in the war with Peru in the 1880s and the War of the Pacific, 1879-83, but also in Chile's most grievous internal conflict, the civil war of 1891, more than any other factor, the navy, and its institutions, would have been welcome. Similarly, on more recent events, little attention is given to the para-military police, the *carabineros*, the distinctive, khaki-clad, well-trained, disciplined and professional force, enjoying in contrast to their counterparts elsewhere a somewhat akin to that of the British police forces for efficiency and courtesy.

On the present century, however, Professor Nunn's book is more than a little out of date. It is particularly sound and convincing on the two basic problems which have troubled Chile's normal pattern of relations between the services and the civilian power, the period between 1924 and 1931, and that which began with Salvador Allende's election in 1970. But, of course, are generally in the nature of a sketch, and in different periods, preferring to stress the unique nature of particular historical circumstances. That the privilege as masters of the situation, but the exercise can often be illuminating, and in Chile's case, as Professor Nunn illustrates, there are quite striking parallels between the Chilean military intervention of 1924-25, and the military coup of 1973.

Both interventions occurred in an atmosphere of national uncertainty, the product of acute economic deterioration and the total failure of the

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The patriotic fraud

By David Rock

MARK FALCOFF AND

RONALD H. DOLKART (Editors):

Prologue to Perón

Argentina in Depression and War

1930-1943

236pp. University of California Press. £9.10.

In the eyes of its detractors, the period between 1930 and 1943 in Argentina was the "Infamous Decade" set between the rule of the two great twentieth-century populist movements: Radicalism which was displaced by a coup d'état at the onset of depression in 1930, and Peronism which emerged in the confusing atmosphere of the world war between 1936 and 1955. The four governments of the 1930s, until the second successful military coup of 1943, were controlled by conservative establishment groups, at the centre of which were the conservative interests of Buenos Aires supported by the military and by landowners in the interior, outside the rich pampas lands of the east. Of the four presidents, two were military men (Uriburu and Justo), and two conservatively political (Saenz Peña and Sáenz Peña), the last two associated with rival factions (Ortiz and Castillo).

The problems confronted by these four administrations were broadly similar, and this gives the period its unity. In the first place, they had the task of superintending a socially diversified polity with an experience of political participation stretching back into the nineteenth century. Secondly, they assumed the burdens of economic management in a period of depression and international war. With some differences in emphasis, which reflected the division of conservative politicians between fascism and conservatism, and shifting external conditions as depression was followed by recovery in the late 1930s and then by war, their responses had much in common. With the exception of the conservative politician General Uriburu, to create a political system reminiscent of Primo de Rivera's Spain in 1930-31, they adhered in principle to representative government. They managed to avoid the more repugnant measures of repression and censorship which were resorted to in Argentina in recent years. Instead they attempted an already somewhat feeble opposition by invoking electoral fraud, thus ensuring congressional majorities and the continuity of conservative control over the presidency. In the economic sphere the principal aim of each administration, and the new generation of technocrats it elevated to power, was the protection of Argentina's overseas trading links, above all with Britain, coupled with a programme of import substitution.

The authors of the present volume imply that the chief significance of the 1930s lay in their preparing the

way for the drama which followed under Juan Perón; nevertheless, the period does have important points of interest in its own right. Looking at the failure of similar conservative programmes since the 1950s, one is bound to ask why the Argentina of forty years ago proved such a docile patient, adapting itself to the remedies prescribed for it with barely a murmur. Such a question can only be answered fully by examining the country's institutional and social structure in the 1930s. *Prologue to Perón* hardly achieves this, but it does help to elucidate its subject in all the same, combining a general descriptive emphasis, which serves to introduce the subject to English-speaking students, its dramatic personality, its major events and achievements with a series of more detailed analyses and arguments.

As a whole, the work evinces considerable skill and care on the part of its editors, both in the selection of subjects for discussion and in establishing a broad uniformity of interpretation. The picture which emerges is that the term "Infamous Decade" coined by a frustrated Radical opposition, is perhaps a little harsh. Rather, with the exception of Gustavo Sáenz Peña, in his critical discussion of popular culture during the period, the authors would probably incline towards the view that the conservative establishment associated with rival factions (Ortiz and Castillo).

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The problems confronted by these four administrations were broadly similar, and this gives the period its unity. In the first place, they had the task of superintending a socially diversified polity with an experience of political participation stretching back into the nineteenth century. Secondly, they assumed the burdens of economic management in a period of depression and international war. With some differences in emphasis, which reflected the division of conservative politicians between fascism and conservatism, and shifting external conditions as depression was followed by recovery in the late 1930s and then by war, their responses had much in common. With the exception of the conservative politician General Uriburu, to create a political system reminiscent of Primo de Rivera's Spain in 1930-31, they adhered in principle to representative government. They managed to avoid the more repugnant measures of repression and censorship which were resorted to in Argentina in recent years. Instead they attempted an already somewhat feeble opposition by invoking electoral fraud, thus ensuring congressional majorities and the continuity of conservative control over the presidency. In the economic sphere the principal aim of each administration, and the new generation of technocrats it elevated to power, was the protection of Argentina's overseas trading links, above all with Britain, coupled with a programme of import substitution.

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